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ESSAY
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[By William Alexander Mitchell]

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ON
CAPACITY AND GENIUS;
AND THE
NATURE OF GHOSTS.

{ Printed by J. Mitchell, }
{ Newcastle upon Tyne. }

AN

ESSAY

ON

Capacity and Genius;

TO PROVE THAT THERE IS NO ORIGINAL MENTAL SUPERIORITY BETWEEN
THE MOST ILLITERATE AND THE MOST LEARNED OF MANKIND;
AND THAT NO GENIUS, WHETHER INDIVIDUAL OR NA-
TIONAL, IS INNATE, BUT SOLELY PRODUCED BY
AND DEPENDENT ON CIRCUMSTANCES.

ALSO,

AN ENQUIRY

INTO THE

NATURE OF GHOSTS,

AND OTHER APPEARANCES SUPPOSED TO BE
SUPERNATURAL.

By William A Mitchell. Ed^d by J. Cumming.

“Haud equidem credo, quia sit divinitus illis

“Ingenium, aut rerum fato prudentia major,—”

VIRG. GEORG.

LONDON:

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J. CUMMING, DUBLIN.

[1820?]



ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

TO THE
IMMORTAL MEMORY
OF
JOHN LOCKE,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE

DEDICATED,

WITH AN HUMBLE HOPE THAT THEY MAY TEND
TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE
GREAT WORK OF

TRUTH,

WHICH HE SO ABLY ADVOCATED.

INTRODUCTION.

HAS not Mr Locke already sufficiently established the non-existence of innateness? This is the first question that will naturally suggest itself to the generality of readers; and, therefore, before we proceed farther, we feel it incumbent upon ourselves to answer it to their satisfaction. Mr Locke's labours were more particularly directed to the subversion, in general, of innate principles and ideas; our work is written against a commonly received opinion of the original superiority of one intellect over another. Against this doctrine, little is directly advanced by Mr Locke, in his Essay on the Human Un-

derstanding: the following paragraph, however, will be recollected in his work on education :—

“ I think I may say that of all the men we
“ meet with, nine parts out of ten are what
“ they are, good or evil, useful or not, by
“ their education. It is that which makes
“ the great difference in mankind. The little
“ or almost insensible impressions on our ten-
“ der infancies, have very important and last-
“ ing consequences; and there it is, as in the
“ fountains of some rivers where a gentle
“ application of the hand turns the flexible
“ waters into channels that make them take
“ quite contrary courses; and by this little
“ direction given them at first in the source,
“ they receive different tendencies, and arrive
“ at last at very remote and distant places.”—

Octavo edit. of Locke's Works,
p. 1 and 2 of the Essay.

Even in this passage the profound metaphysician speaks with the greatest doubt and hesitation; he considers this as a mere matter of opinion, not of proof; and unless we can believe that ten men out of every hundred are idiots, a supposition which has by no means facts for its foundation, he was not entirely an advocate for original mental equality. Taking it for granted, however, that by this sentence capacity and genius had been proved to be the offspring of circumstances, the continuance of the contrary opinion demands that that doctrine should be supported and reiterated.

In an essay upon such a subject, and in taking such a line of argument, the author may nevertheless be deemed by some foolish and trifling, and by others daring and presumptuous. But whatever may be the ideas of the reader as he proceeds, I hope he will at least indulge me with a patient attention

to the conclusion, in order that I may not be prejudged, or condemned without an impartial perusal. The rather will my wish be regarded, when I assure those whose consideration I shall be fortunate enough to merit, that I have not committed to paper these, I fear, too unconnected observations, with any desire of entering upon an useless argument on verbal distinctions, but with the most earnest expectation that I may arrive at the truth, or direct others in its pursuit, at once the true tests and legitimate objects of philosophy.

In this age of literature no apology will be necessary for sending another work into the world—for adding to the heap which some may imagine already too largely accumulated; the evil corrects itself; though numerous the volumes which seek the public approbation, small indeed is the number selected as friends, companions, or instructors; some are read, admired, and forgotten; some are examined

and rejected, but still remembered as the propagators of principles to be avoided, or called up to contribute to the merriment of convivial societies, and to excite the spleen of the fluttering wasps whom scandal acknowledges as her retainers; and many, too many, are suffered to sink unperused into oblivion. Of the last class there have been some which deserved a better destiny; but time makes amends for the fault which the wide extension of knowledge has occasioned. Reason resumes the seat whence she had been thrown by prejudice or caprice, and the work which has been sold for waste paper, or laid for years untouched amidst dust and sermons, has been esteemed by the same public which once deemed it unworthy of its price. The author hopes he will not be of the first of the classes he has enumerated, and he would rather be thrown unheeded amongst the third, than submit to the tortures inflicted on the second.

In the publication of this volume, fame is not his object; though when popular applause, or the kind reception of the learned, may raise an author to celebrity, who is there that can reject the laurel which is the immediate consequence of the one, or would disdain the merited panegyric of the other? If philosophy can own such a votary, no man can acknowledge him as a brother, and he must be either superhuman, or possessed of the soul which animates the meanest reptile in creation.—His only desire, as he has said before, is to ascertain the truth; to have established firmly the veracity of his doctrine or its falsity, and if this essay should gain him any portion of the world's consideration, he will not despise it, though he only seeks it as inseparable from the fulfilment of that desire.

An ambition for paradoxical investigation has been stigmatised as one of the banes of true philosophical enquiry; but this is only a

reasonable conclusion when the word paradox is taken in a sense which can never with propriety be assumed ; for truth, however contrary to the modes of reasoning adopted by the world, is truth notwithstanding ; and the man who even sacrifices a life in subverting and overthrowing vulgar errors and superstitions, is an enemy to no part of mankind, but to those who are inimical to themselves.—Some men think they do right in supporting the opinions of ages, for what has so long withstood the test of time cannot be fallacious ; and others, from their having demonstrated the folly of one or two dogmas of their ancestors, consider themselves justified in declaring their knowledge and precepts to have been totally erroneous. Neither course can be the right one ; except that sometimes an argument may be deduced from the customs or sayings of the ancients, it is best that truth should stand on its own foundation, even if all the institutions of the universe

should be hurled to the earth by its attainment.

It is not the author's wish to consider the sentiments of the world in general as untrue; on the contrary, he will endeavour as much as possible to reconcile them to the propositions he defends; but if any variation or irreconcilable contradiction should occur, nations and individuals must declare themselves to have been in the wrong, rather than that truth should stoop to the correction of their interests or prejudices. Truth is in itself unchangeable, but the paths that lead to it are innumerable. It is hard to find, but when discovered, men are convinced that their search has been successful. If we can conceive a figure with sides that are almost countless, we may imagine truth to be on one of them; every side is deceitful but that of truth, and when that is attained, no man can be longer the creature of deception. Thus, amongst

the multitude of controversies with which mankind have been perplexed, the disputants on both sides might often be perceived to be converging to one common point; as they travel, they quarrel about the propriety of their direction, and when each arrives at what he considers the place of his destination, he is astonished to meet in fellowship with his antagonist. But short-sighted mortals too frequently forget, or are blind to their conclusions, while they waste their strength on trivial differences, with demoniac malignity. Almost all parties allow something which is necessary to our doctrine; but in the eagerness of contradiction, they neglect to pursue that something to the end. Much, it will be seen, is yet to be learned in the art of removing prejudices; for the means which are employed in eradicating them from some, are the foundation of the most inveterate in others. The failure of many to convince a wandering people of their errors, has been too often oc-

casioned by a neglect to consider every train of circumstances under the delusive influence of which they acted. The same medicine which will cure a violent disorder in one man, will produce it, or prolong its devastations, in another ; and therefore it is necessary, as well for philosophers as physicians, to examine the particular constitutions of those whom they expect to cure or amend.

Those of my readers who reflect upon this observation, will easily perceive that it is not possible, by so short an essay, to convince those who are yet mentally the pupils of the nursery,—those whom the narrowness of their information have deceived into an idea that they have examined a question in all its bearings, whilst they have only dwelt with attention the side to which they were attached by original prepossessions. To weigh impartially the arguments by which any doctrine is supported, is more difficult than is generally supposed ;

and therefore I shall think myself particularly fortunate, if I only ensure a calm and dispassionate consideration of my subject.

I hope I shall be found to have written nothing without its effect, in the essay on apparitions. The usage of names and ideas have been repeatedly urged as arguments for the truth of the hypotheses to which they belonged. The appearance of ghosts has been alleged to be certain from the existence of the word, and the devil has been confidently *proved* to be no descendant of the great Arimanes, from the dissimilitude of his title. I hope none of my readers approach me with these idle notions; if such have taken possession of their imagination, it would be as well that they should not meddle with discussion, for where the mind is under the bondage of such cobwebs of iron, no question can be beneficially discussed.

It might have been expected that the human mind was already so far freed from superstition, that such a dissertation was entirely unnecessary. But it is surprising that notwithstanding all the exertions of philanthropic investigation to prove their non-existence, every country church yard has its ghost, and many a northern, not to say southern castle, which the good inhabitants thought it sacrilege to modernize, yet possesses its haunted chamber, its flitting lights, and midnight rustling. The evil can only be accounted for, by the neglect of the parents, who were convinced, to teach their conviction to their children; a duty which they considered beneath their own notice, and fit only to be fulfilled by those who were entrusted with the immediate care of their education. Superstitions in general are extremely fascinating from some directions, though from others gloomy, forbidding, and dangerous; and, therefore, whilst the tutor is endeavouring to remove them, he should

paint in colours if possible equally attractive, all the advantages of a mind undisturbed by fears of visionary intrusion; he should shew his pupil a strong picture of the time when human nature grovelled under the yoke of mental despotism, and contrast it with some happy period when it shall bear down every obstacle that opposes its victorious progress. Into the minds of those who may be yet untaught, no idea of supernatural visitations should be inculcated, and instead of frightening into compliance by threatening the appearance of a monster, the word of moderate command should be made the signal of instant obedience.

These hints I have thought it necessary to lay down, independent of the essays on which the reader is now entering. He who peruses them, will, I hope, think himself not unimproved by the portion of his time they have occupied; if not in reading them for the first

time, in confirming what he has seen or thought before; if not in believing them correct, in reflecting that he has the happiness of possessing a more complete knowledge and more accurate information. These observations may also apply to the essays themselves; for if in them there is nothing new to be discovered, the repetition of what was old from one who believed it to be in many instances entirely novel, will collaterally establish what was before dubious and controverted; if there is any thing before unknown, the author is sufficiently gratified in being the means of its communication.

The essay on capacity and genius, was suggested by an observation on the liberality of the sentiment, from the wife of a gentleman whose discoveries may be said to have produced a new æra in mathematics; and I hope the goodness of the intention will sufficiently excuse the indifference of the execution.

The enquiry respecting apparitions was originally written and read, but in an unfinished and unconnected state, as a college exercise.

AN
E S S A Y
ON
CAPACITY AND GENIUS.

BEFORE we commence our observations on capacity, a few words on general innateness may be necessary; for, supposing it proved that all the common powers are acquired, it would be absurd to argue in favor of an innate superiority. That they are acquired, we shall endeavour to demonstrate; but, in case our positions should be found to be insecure, we shall proceed to reason upon the superiority, as if they were innate.

Considerable stress has been laid upon a difference between innate principles and ideas;

intended, no doubt, after the great overthrow of innatism by Mr. Locke, as an excuse for the reproduction of such absurdities. When Mr. Locke said that there could be no innate principles, because there were no innate ideas, he had great reason to consider his argument as unanswerable; but this was not the opinion of those prize-fighters of literature who believe nothing incapable of confutation.— They said that the philosopher had mistaken propositions for principles, and they sung their own pæan without defining the principles they defended. The moral sense is one of their assumptions, which, were we disposed to investigate it from creation, we might prove to be ideal, from the difference between good and evil being discovered by Adam *accidentally*. But to proceed by another method: might it not be expected that such an innate moral principle would save new-born children from an imputation of total ignorance? But does not the child, when atten-

tion is excited, grasp at the candle, the red-hot poker, and in short at every bright object, whether harmless or injurious? Does not, then, the being burnt, or otherwise injured, constitute the original distinction between good and evil; and if so, where are good and evil to be found, except in social intercourse? If I tell a falsehood, it is wrong, because my neighbour of whom I told it may be injured by it in reputation; if a man neglect going to church, his conduct is improper, because his friends and neighbours think it sinful, and injurious to religion and morality. And have not nations, immense tracts of country, held customs sacred, of the impropriety of which they had no conception, but which to us would be revolting to every principle of common sense, religion, and humanity?* Nay, if a

* Mr. Locke has dwelt sufficiently on this subject; I only mentioned it here, because some of the nations have been proved to exist, which were said, when he wrote, to be nothing more than argumentative fabrications.

man should live alone in a wild forest, how could he know what was best or worst to be done in every action innately, when most of what is best or worst proceeds from the institution and practice of society?

Still I cannot but consider Mr. Locke's argument as unanswered; for can a man think without having ideas, and when he does think first, are his reflections upon any principle? Taking it for granted, then, that neither principles nor ideas are innate, what innateness can be possessed by the intellect? What is mind, but the thinking principle; and what is the thinking principle, but ideas of sensation, almost indefinitely modified? My opponents may alledge that this leaves no line of distinction between thought and what they may designate the principle of thinking; what they consider to be the latter, however, I call the substratum: the title of thinking principle for the foundation of ideas, must be inconsist-

ent with propriety; for whatever thinks not, though it be the ground-work of thought, should never be confounded with the property of cogitation. When we speak of a man, whose greatness of mind has made him remarkable; are not his actions and ideas the subjects of our praise or emulation? We never extol any hidden origin of eminence; what is before our eyes, or presented to our minds, alone occasions our commendation or dislike. The substratum, then, is the name we give to the principle of thought, not the thinking principle; the latter can only be the Deity, the great mover of the universe, and can never have existence in mere formations of perishable earth.* The substratum we suppose to be an internal mirror of the senses, open to every impression; a certain number

* The difference between this, and the principles for the existence of which the innatists contend, is easily perceptible. That such a substratum must exist, no one can deny; it is only some similarity betwixt it and the ideas of which it is the foundation, that is the subject of disputation.

of impressions form the intellect, which is modified indirectly by circumstances, and directly by education. They that imagine the mind to be any thing else, must suppose the innate existence of ideas; there are many, however, who assert, that, except that it is in a dormant state, the mind of the new-born infant is the same as when exercised; that it is like the string of a violin, existing, though it does not vibrate. But there is something deficient in this, as, in such a subject, there must be in all metaphorical explanations.—The string of any instrument is perceptible, though it be not played upon, but the mind remains unknown till it is exerted. All that we can write upon this mysterious and awful subject, might be summed up in one observation; that man possesses, shortly after birth, an adaptation of his senses to external circumstances, and that from the varieties of this adaptation, the intellect is produced.—How it is produced, is a question which divi-

nity alone could expound; for betwixt circumstances and the substratum, there is no natural connexion, and it is only explicable by a reference to the omnipotent and eternal cause of all creation.

This connexion equally puzzles those who deny the possibility of innateness and those who are its supporters; but, however ready we might be to leave the arguments on both sides to the discretion of the reader, as the innatists are determined, and verbose, or, as they would term it, *argumentative*, we feel it our duty to enter a little further upon their doctrine. One of the great arguments for the innateness of something like mind, is, that thought must have existed previous to its exercise. This is an argument drawn only from comparison; but the human mind, as Mr. Hume has said of the universe, “is an object quite singular and unparalleled; no other object that has fallen under our observation

“ bears any similarity to it ; neither it nor
“ its cause can be comprehended under any
“ known species.” I am of opinion that the
mind did not exist previous to its exercise ; its
existence and first exercise must rationally be
one and the same. But, if man does not al-
ways think, will not this be overthrown ?—
Certainly it cannot ; as well might it be ar-
gued that the musical string was the same
when it did not exist, and when it was not
played upon. Am I then to be denied cre-
dence to what I have advanced, and proved,
as far as it is capable of proof, because the
mind is incomparable ? On this ground alone
ought the doctrine of innateness to be totally
disbelieved ; for if we can find nothing to
which the human mind can with propriety be
compared, is it reasonable for us to bring to-
gether all things incongruous, inexplicable,
and absurd, for the invention of a compari-
son ? Let philosophers endeavour to explain
to me the mystery of eternity ; alas ! they are

foiled, and their comprehension puzzled and confounded. They *compare* it to a circle; but every circle is made,—every circle is begun and completed. It is true, a circle made by a painter, if it be of one uniform color and thickness, has no *end* to the eye of a common observer; but another painter will easily guess, from the situation of the canvas, the light, or the slightest variation of the pencil, imperceptible to every other person, where his brother artist commenced and concluded the circle. Supposing, however, that the metaphor is correct, and that the rage for resemblances must be complied with, may we not consider the commencement of the human mind as circular, and indefinite to all but its Creator?—That it must commence with circumstances is evident, and any argument to the contrary would prove it to be eternal. External objects create attention, which by education is moulded into reasoning and memory. Thus far we have opposed the doctrine of innate-

ness ; but if even that were proved to satisfaction, it would be necessary for our opponents to demonstrate that circumstances did not produce the difference in capacity.

ON CAPACITY.

Supposing all mankind to possess nothing more originally than the substratum we have described ; have we any reason but from appearances to imagine any primary inequality ? none that I can discover ; and is it not plain from the universal care and protection of the Creator, that no man was originally created superior to another ? Nothing can disprove universal equality, but arguments deduced from the existence of a particular Providence, which would at once bring us to the verge of prophanity.

Mr. Locke has said that the human mind was, at its commencement, like a piece of

white paper, or a *tabula rasa*,* pure and without impression. Now, if that tablet were at

* This comparison of the mind to a *tabula rasa* has been objected to, as it does not properly explain the phenomena of the recurrence of ideas. No metaphorical illustration can be expected to contribute such an explanation; and be it observed, we scarcely ever make use of metaphors in this work, except in instances which had given occasion for them in situations much more glaring, for the purposes of the innatists. We will conceive, then, this mirror of the senses to be of a globular form, at first unmarked, continually revolving, and always presenting that which the mind has had before the most frequently in its presence. But we think the objection to our first comparison, however ancient and however formidable, is really premature. Human knowledge is limited, and therefore it is said the mind is limited in its pursuits; and why is the mind limited? Because there is not an infinitude of circumstances for the operation of any one intellect. The *tabula rasa* has limits, but we cannot assign them till we know that no other object will impress itself on the imagination. In fact, its limits are the cessation of circumstances to operate. If they were more, the limits would be larger; if they were infinite, the tablet would be unlimited. That object which makes the *deepest impression*, i. e. which has been the most frequently presented to the mind, is easiest remembered; and that which is impressed but once, except it be something very remarkable, is faintly perceptible, if it be at all an object of recollection. Though this partakes of the imperfection of all metaphors, it will appear to every observer that it is completely adapted to our present purpose, and is less liable to objection than almost any other we could have adopted.

the birth unmarked and unimpressed, even were it to possess some inexplicable embryo of cogitation, would it not be presumptuous in us to say how fine an impression it was capable of receiving, or how long that impression would remain unobliterated? Though we might form a tolerable idea of the capacity of a particular vessel when empty, till filled, its exact containing power could not be ascertained with philosophic certainty. How audacious then is it not in man, to assume a sort of divine authority, and to endeavour to prove that one person's capacity when he was ushered into the world was narrow, and another person's comprehensive! The *tolerable* and incomplete admeasurement of the capacity of an empty vessel may be urged as an argument in favor of natural superiority; but to vary the illustration: suppose two vessels left in the open air, by chance, or by no matter whom or what, both having the same dimensions, and both being apparently and really of the

same capacity, and conceive the branches of a tree to intervene between the heavens and one of them, so that one shall be filled with water when it rains, and the other shall remain comparatively empty ; surely there is no person so foolish as to consider the difference in the contents of these vessels a difference in capacity ! So it is, however, with the generality of mankind ; they estimate the extent of the capacity by the present condition of the intellect, without considering in some cases the immense impediments to improvement, and in others the numerous opportunities.

Bad consequences of innatism.—This is a doctrine which will lead to conclusions the most unchristian, and inimical to the existence of civilized society ; it causes man to distrust the ability of his fellow creature, and to consider him incapable of improvement, because for a while unimproved ; it has a tendency to relax the efforts of the preceptor in

bringing to perfection the intellectual faculties of his pupils, because when he perceives all present means of effecting his purpose unavailing, he will abandon his task in despair. How many are there, who, taking it for granted they have no capacity, pursue life in a course of dull monotony, whereas they might have been adding to their own enjoyments, and increasing the happiness of all around them? Does not then the doctrine of capacity being limited to particular persons, strike at the root of every human science, and destroy hope, the greatest blessing of which human nature is susceptible. But all the dreadful consequences of such an hypothesis have not been enumerated. By being made more susceptible of happiness, one man is made happier than another from the very commencement of his existence. Is this consistent with omnipotent benevolence? It makes the Deity a tyrant, and the worst of tyrants; and when ideas of the despotism of the Almighty

have once become prevalent, scepticism has obtained over the soul her terrible dominion ; atheism has drawn the sword of cruelty, and thrown open the flood-gates of the blood and misery of human kind.

Nothing improper in our doctrine.—Let no man imagine, that, because I am arguing for the position that the most ignorant rustic in creation, had he fallen into different circumstances, might have become the poet, the orator, the statesman, the commander, or the monarch, that I mean to produce improper ideas of the conduct of the Deity, in having placed us in the spheres in which we move. If men had not various appetites and passions, no one would be satisfied ; all would be disorganized and unhappy. It would be impossible long to proceed along the streets of London, if every person were going in the same path, and adopted the same pace and the same direction. I wish not, as things are, to

see all men with the same inclinations, the same rapidity of step, or similarity of business; but I desire to demonstrate, that the diversity of disposition, the difference in gait, and the variety of employment, proceed not from the immediate interference, but from the secondary influence of Providence. The present artificial institutions of society render different tempers, passions, and capacities, necessary and unavoidable; but there have been times when men were in every respect more nearly assimilated. Our knowledge is the ephemeral acquirement of a few hundred years, and our imagination cannot penetrate much farther into futurity. That society is, as it should permanently exist, it is therefore impossible to determine. Why then argue for the innateness of a difference which is but temporary and circumstantial? Why accuse us of arraigning the actions of omnipotence, when we only connect a part of them with the eternal chain of universal beneficence?

Those who contend that men are of different original formation, cannot go beyond the narrow conceptions of their present existence, or the fallacy of their reasoning would be perceptible to themselves; but, by the examination of the doctrine we advocate, the Deity will be recognized, not as the feudal governor and wilful creator of mankind, but as the benevolent and necessary parent of so many emanations from his own essential eternity.

Instances of extraordinary capacity.—*Me thinks I see some skilful schoolmaster sneering at me, and attempting to convince me of the folly of my arguments, by what he will consider unanswerable facts,—the different dispositions of his scholars. But it is not, he

* We have not in this part of our essay examined any characters of celebrated men, in order to show the effect of circumstances in their formation. For the establishment of our arguments, a sufficient number will be examined towards the conclusion of that portion of our treatise more immediately dedicated to genius.

should remember, that all men have the same capacity, that I assert; but that all might have had, had they been placed in circumstances equally advantageous. There are plants which, when grown in a coal mine, will have their leaves white, instead of green. But those plants are, nevertheless, of the same species and the same genus with others which preserve their health and green appearance; and who is there so foolish or so obstinate, as to deny that they would have had the same juices and the same color, if they had had the same advantages, as those which were grown with the benefit of air and sunshine? A story has been frequently told of a young man related to, or protected by, a gardener to one of the Dukes of Buccleuch, which has been said to prove beyond a doubt the existence of superior natural capacity. This young person was met by the Duke himself with Newton's Principia in his hand, seemingly highly delighted with the work, and

appearing to understand it perfectly. The astonished Duke immediately asked him by whom he had been taught to appreciate and to become master of a book so difficult and abstruse. The reply was, that it only required the knowledge of the alphabet to understand it!* There are parts of this relation

* A schoolmaster had a scholar whom he had found it impossible to teach even the first rudiments of language. The alphabet was to him an insuperable barrier. When every other method was ineffectual, the ingenious tutor had recourse to a singular expedient. He selected a number of boys as nearly as possible in a regular gradation in point of size, from the smallest upward. The smallest he named *Artful*; the next in height, *Bold*; the next, *Careless*; the fourth, (the stupid scholar himself) *Dunce*; and so on through the whole. By degrees the boy became acquainted with his playmates under their new appellations; in time he assimilated them to the characters of his horn book; and when once he had crossed the rubicon, he met and overcame every difficulty with an ardour and ability which was as surprising as his original stupidity. This, with the general assertion that some boys are easy and some difficult to instruct, was given me as a proof that capacity was at least liable to natural unevenness. But this falls short of success, as will every other argument of a similar origin. We have not a statement of the boy's early life, and I doubt not but some accident had contributed to cramp his first intellectual exertions, though when his instructor had broke the boom that interrupted his progress, he rushed into the mental ocean, eager and unimpeded.

which should be verified before they are believed. We have no proof that the boy did at the time understand the book; he pretended to peruse it; it might have been a contrivance to gain favor or preferment. But does the story sanction the conclusion for which it is related? By no means is it proved that this boy, or that any person ever attained pre-eminence, without an adequate education, either from accident or design. But supposing that Newton's Principia, and some introductory mathematical books, had miraculously come into this young person's possession, is it not true that the difficulty in most of human transactions and attainments is not so much in themselves, as in the folly of those who imagine that they are incapable of pursuing them, or in the prejudices of the multitude, who cannot conceive that to be easily acquired, which was so long and so difficult in the invention? When not encumbered with a weight of evidence, the young and uncultivated mind seizes with avidity on the first

object of desire, and when it mixes with the opinions of the world, it is often astonished to discover how arduous a task was that which it considered an amusement. It is not the real perplexity of any art or science that prevents genius from excelling, so much as what we have stated, and the ideal obstacles raised by the interested few who have attained the goal of their desires—the fences by which they keep others from the honors they would enjoy alone and undisturbed. It is impossible to give an opinion upon the foundations of such an anecdote as we have been relating; or if any man could be found who would, it would be improper. If the commencement of the lives of celebrated men were more detailed by their writers, the false notions of innateness would disappear; for the idea of superior capacity appears to me to have proceeded from the indolence of biographers, as an excuse for the want of more accurate information.

We may be enabled to form an idea of the progress of capacity, from an examination of the gradual advancement in life of two entirely opposite characters. The one is employed, when young, in affairs of husbandry, by a family, who, however meritoriously they may fulfil their moral and religious duties, rise not higher in human knowledge than is necessary for the cultivation of their possessions. Accident throws a book in his way, perhaps a Newton's Principia. He sees what opinion his companions entertain of it, and rejects it as useless and superfluous. He can drink the village beverage, and tread the mazes of the rural dance as well as his fellow laborers; the evening brings him to the can and rustic song, or tale of ghosts and witchcraft, and the morning restores him vigorous to his team. By and bye he marries Susan or Priscilla, procures a little farm, and carries corn to market, and cattle to the butcher, as his ancestors did be-

fore him. Such a man, when he has advanced some years into manhood, is the same in every situation. If fortune raise him beyond his original establishment, the husbandman is predominant; if necessity compel him to enlist, and he survives the war, however changed his complexion or his dress, circumstance has formed his intellect, and the rough impression of education is indelible. The other commences herd-boy in a family of the same description. A clergyman of the parish, a benevolent and scientific man, becomes the friend of a young son of the farmer, whom he considers of a *good capacity*, from some unthinking remark with which he happened to be delighted, and which was by accident ingenious. He instructs him, and he increases in knowledge. Our young herd-boy perceives the attachment of the parson, and envies the condition of his young master.—He has no idea of capacity, but thinks that what one man does, another may venture to

attempt. The parson discovers him; lends him his protection and assistance, and he rises to be a great mathematician or a profound philosopher. Or, perhaps, the farmer's son enters the army; he follows the footsteps of his first guide in the path of knowledge; and when he is killed, the little herd-boy mounts into his situation. Here is the effect of circumstances evidently displayed, but where is there any proof of superior capacity?

Those who suppose the existence of a naturally superior capacity, approach too nearly to the exploded doctrine of innate ideas to tolerate what they profess to believe, if they would trace it to its origin, or follow it to its consequences. Many use the words 'natural capacity,' without connecting them with any idea, but a vague notion of something above common humanity, and if they were for a moment to examine their own expressions, they would retract the absurdities which inadver-

tency alone could occasion. It was singular enough that assertions so ridiculous, required to be overthrown by the erudition and understanding of a Locke; but how must mankind laugh, or rather blush, at their own shortsightedness, when they behold that they have been supporting a doctrine that is even more monstrous and absurd than that of innate ideas. These, the old philosophers imagined every man to possess; but the doctrine of superior natural capacity, pretty generally supported by the new ones, pre-supposes that one man is possessed of a power for receiving information much earlier, and in greater perfection than his fellows;—taking it for granted, as we said in the beginning, that the tablet of the mind can receive a certain large and durable impression, before they have become acquainted with either its extent or its consistency. If this be not the case, what do the assertors of natural capacity mean by the expression? Can they say that the capacity is

great, before they have known it exercised?— If they can, then is it possible to see the faery visions of the painter or the poet, before the one has perused his verses, or the other touched his canvas! If they cannot, then what is there to prove, that their ideas of capacity are not founded upon the false suppositions of monks and schoolmen, who conceived some men to be favored with a peculiar power by Providence, because they knew not the circumstances which produced the actions that distinguished the objects of their admiration?

We say then, that all sensible children, i. e. all children whose senses are adapted to the operation of circumstances, have one common capacity for receiving ideas. It is true we have seen some children receive ideas earlier than others, appear more sprightly, and exhibit greater knowledge of the circumstances of which they are spectators: but there was

a prior period, at which all children were alike. There is considerable difference in the rapidity of receiving ideas, in the first few years after birth; but it must be recollected that there is scarcely an instance of any two children, from the moment of their perception, having the same objects before them.—The difference of objects occasions a difference in their minds, and in the force and arrangement of their conceptions; but whenever a number of children have for any length of time been accustomed to congregate, to hear the same conversations, and to be the spectators of the same transactions, in proportion to the time they have remained, or as they have been of the same age when they came together, so will their ideas become more nearly allied, and their whole conduct be more nearly similar. Familiar phrases, singular trains of ideas, and eccentric habits, are often acquired by boys at school in such a manner, that persons have perceived that

they were educated under the same master, though perhaps they never before met or associated.

What is capacity?—Capacity, then, is an assistant qualification to genius,—in general, the faculty of acquiring that mental nourishment which genius knows only how to apply. We shall find, on examination, that there is no extraordinary capacity, falsely called innate, but that which is produced by a peculiar union of the faculties of reasoning and memory. These faculties are possessed by every man to whose education common attention has been paid; exercise alone is required to produce that peculiar union, and to bring them to perfection. One of these collects the principal or the whole of the ideas which are presented to the mind;—the other arranges them, rejects those which are not worth preserving, and treasures up those which are useful or uncommon. Nu-

merous instances might be cited of persons who have had the faculty of memory to an extraordinary degree, and have been remarkable for nothing else but the prostitution of their powers to unworthy purposes. It will be in the recollection of many of my readers, that *this* man could count all the words spoken at a play, and could enumerate all the letters in a book, sometimes all the figures in an arithmetic, or that *that* could read all the signs in a street, and then detail them in regular succession.— Yet such a person could not perhaps have perused a single page with pleasure or improvement; or could leave the performance of a Garrick, lamenting only that he failed in the enumeration of the notes which issued from the orchestra!* Such men, however from long habit they may have brought their memories to a surprising exactness, cannot be said to have a capacity different from the most

* This is said to have happened to Jedediah Buxton.

common intellects, because their reasoning faculties remained comparatively unexercised. There are other persons to whom capacity may be said to be equally a stranger, who have no memories. Their mnemonic powers having been through life unused, have been through life altogether imperfect; and if they attempt to argue, they generally reason to their own confutation.

That any man, then, can have a good memory, or any memory innately, seems to me a palpable absurdity; for, no man when he is born can recollect any thing that happened *previous* to his existence; and how can that, with any propriety, be called innate, which was not manifested, till circumstances, by their repetition, caused in the mind of the infant, their own recurrence to himself, and those around him?

We might here enter at considerable length.

into a consideration of the phenomena of attention ; but they are so plainly the result of circumstance or education, accidental or designed, that it can detract nothing from our arguments to leave them to the examination of our readers.

But what need can we have to attribute to the immediate interposition of Providence the faculties of reasoning and memory, which may have been produced by a collision of circumstances not singular in themselves, though perhaps strange in their appearance to the mirror of the senses affected by them, and remarkable in the order of their succession?—The universe is not governed by partial laws, or regulations which are different in different situations ; all capacity, i. e. all memory and all reasoning, is given by nature, or it is the consequence of circumstances ; it *cannot* proceed from both ; and if we find no evidence that it is the gift of nature, and have fair and

presumptive proof that it is the offspring of circumstance and education, common sense must point out the road to truth, from which none can be led astray, but by their own thoughtless folly and prejudices, at once obstinate and unreasonable.

Let us suppose a few children secluded from the world, and preserved alive by mere instinct, in a state of total ignorance; let us consider them running wild in the forest, their only provender the scanty berry, and the raw limbs of the animals their swiftness may outrun. What have been found to be the dreadful consequences of such seclusion? Godlike reason cannot exercise the functions she has never fulfilled; the fear and ferocity of the brute and the savage are combined; the music of human speech is horribly supplanted by the yell of the hyæna; nay, in some few instances, the upright dignity of man is exchanged for the posture and actions

of the bear !* Is not this too true a demonstration of the feebleness of man when unas-

* “ In the year 1774, a savage, or wild man, was discovered by the shepherds who fed their flocks in the neighbourhood of the forest of Yuary. This man, who inhabited the rocks that lay near the forest, was very tall, covered with hair like a bear, nimble as the hisars, of a gay humour, and in all appearance of a mild character, as he neither did nor seemed to intend harm to any body. He often visited the cottages, without ever attempting to carry off any thing. He had no knowledge of bread, milk, or cheese. His greatest amusement was to see the sheep running and to scatter them, and he testified his pleasure at this sight by loud fits of laughter, but never attempted to hurt these innocent animals. When the shepherds, (as was frequently the case,) let loose their dogs after him, he fled with the swiftness of an arrow shot from a bow, and never allowed the dogs to come too near him. One morning he came to the cottage of some workmen, and one of them endeavouring to get near him and catch him by the leg, he laughed heartily, and then made his escape. He seemed to be about 30 years of age. As the forest in question is very extensive, and has a communication with vast woods that belong to the Spanish territory, it is natural to suppose that this solitary but cheerful creature had been lost in his infancy, and had subsisted on herbs.”—*Memoir sur les travaux dans les Pyrenees par M. le Roy. Paris 1777.*

“ Péter, commonly known by the name of Péter the wild boy, lies buried in this church yard, opposite to the porch. In the year 1725 he was found in the woods near Hamelen, a fortified town in the electorate of Hanover, when his majesty George I. with his attendants, was hunting in the forest of Hertswold.—He was supposed to be then about 12 years of age, and had sub-

sisted by the species, or by those circumstances which are inseparable from civiliza-

sisted in these woods upon the bark of trees, leaves, berries, &c. for some considerable length of time. How long he had continued in that wild state is altogether uncertain; but that he had formerly been under the care of some person, was evident from the remains of a shirt collar about his neck at the time when he was found. As Hamelen was a town where criminals were confined to work upon the fortifications, it was then conjectured at Hanover that Peter might be the issue of one of those criminals, who had either wandered into the woods and could not find his way back again, or being discovered to be an idiot, was inhumanly turned out by his parents, and left to perish or shift for himself. In the following year, 1726, he was brought over to England. * * * * * Notwithstanding there appeared to be no natural defect in his organs of speech, after all the pains that had been taken with him he could never be brought distinctly to articulate a single syllable, and proved totally incapable of receiving any instruction." (*North Church parish Register, Hertfordshire.*) The register proceeds to give a long and particular account of Peter's being put under the care of various persons. He appeared to have been unable to speak to the very last, though every endeavour was made for his instruction. He danced to music, however, and could hum a tune. For a further description of this singular being, who lived till the age of 72, I refer my readers to the parish Register, to the Annual Register (Dodsley's) for 1784 and 5, and to all the other periodical works and miscellaneous collections of that period. It seems that he was generally considered to be an idiot, though his countenance bore not that appearance.— There is no reason to believe that he could speak when he was

tion? How striking the contrast; how dreadful the degradation! Where are all

lost, and his being left in the woods, or lost there, before the organs of speech were exercised, will account for his never arriving at a distinct utterance of the simplest expressions. That he danced when he heard a tune, till he was exhausted with fatigue, can easily be accounted for, and it proves him to have been no idiot.

This is further evinced by the account of a Mr Burgess, transmitted to Lord Monboddo, and inserted by him in his ancient Metaphysics, by which it appears that Peter could count twenty, and answer various questions distinctly.—*Payne's Geographical Extracts*, p. 507.

“ In the year 1731, as a nobleman was shooting at Songi, near Chalons, in Champagne, he saw something at a distance in the water which he took for a couple of birds, and at which he fired. The supposed birds avoided the shot by diving instantly under the water, and rising at another place, they made to the shore, when it appeared that they were two children about nine or ten years of age. They carried ashore with them several fishes, which they tore in pieces with their fore-teeth, and swallowed without chewing. As they were going from the shore, one of them found a rosary, probably dropped by some traveller, at which she testified great joy by screaming and jumping about. In order to keep it to herself, she covered it with her hand; but her companion, who perceived this, gave her such a blow upon the hand with a sort of club, that she could not move it. With her other hand, however, she struck her companion in return such a blow upon the head with a similar club, as brought her to the ground with a loud shriek. The victor made herself a bracelet with the

your innate ideas and capacity from nature? Did ever a man, or a creature like these, be-

rosary, but she still had so much pity on her companion, that she covered her wound with the skin of a fish which she stripped off, and bound it up with a slip of the bark of a tree.— They then parted. The girl that had been wounded returned to the river, and was never after seen; the other went to the village of Songi. The ignorant people were frightened at her singular appearance, for her color was black, and she had on a scanty covering of rags and skins of animals. They set a great dog at her, but she waited his attack without stirring from her place, and as soon as he was within reach, gave him such a blow on the head with her club as laid him dead on the spot. Unable to gain admission into any house, for every door was shut against her, she returned into the fields, climbed up a tree, and there took her repose. The Viscount d'Epinoy, who was then at his seat at Songi, offered a reward to any one who would catch this wild girl. As it was supposed she would be thirsty, a bucket of water was placed under the tree to entice her down. On awaking, she looked cautiously around, came down and drank, but immediately ascended to the summit of the tree, as if she thought herself not otherwise secure. At length she was allured to come down by a woman, who walked under the tree with a child in her arms, and offered her fish and roots. When she had descended, some persons lying in wait seized her, and conveyed her to the Viscount's seat. At first she was taken into the kitchen, where she fell upon some wild fowl, and ate them up before the cook missed them. A rabbit being offered her, she immediately stripped off the skin and devoured the flesh. An opportunity of observing her with more ease was now obtained, and it was found

come in the woods where he existed, a poet or a philosopher? It is true, perhaps, that

that the black color of her skin was accidental; for, after she had been repeatedly washed, her naturally fair complexion appeared. Her hands were upon the whole well formed, only the fingers, and the thumb in particular, were uncommonly strong, which was undoubtedly ascribable to her frequently climbing trees, as she would swing herself from one to another like a squirrel. The Viscount d'Ep'noy delivered her to the care of a shepherd, recommending him to be extremely attentive to her, under a promise of paying him well for his trouble. On account of her wildness, she was commonly known by the name of the shepherd's beast. It cost a great deal of trouble to render her a little tame. She was very dexterous at making holes in the walls or roof, and would creep through an aperture so small, that an eye-witness could not conceive how it was possible. Once she eloped in a severe frost, during a heavy fall of snow, and after a long search, was found sitting on a tree in the open fields. Nothing was more astonishing than the swiftness and agility with which she ran. Though, latterly, long illness and want of exercise diminished her speed, it was always surprising. She did not take long steps like other people, but her run was rather a flying trip, which was more like gliding than walking. Her feet moved with such quickness, that their motion was scarcely discernible. Several years after she had been caught, she was capable of outstripping wild animals, as she proved to the Queen of Poland in 1737, for being taken out on a hunting party, she ran after rabbits and hares that were started, caught them presently, and brought them to the Queen. The quickness of her eye was equally astonishing. In a moment she could look every

one has shewn himself more generally communicative, and more approaching to civiliza-

way round her, with scarcely turning her head, which was very necessary for her security, and procuring her food in her wild state. Both the girls used to spend their nights on trees. They laid down on a bough, held themselves fast with one hand, and rested their heads on the other. In this situation, according to our maiden's account, they slept very soundly.— In her savage state she had no language, but a sort of wild scream, which sounded frightfully when she was in anger, and particularly when a stranger attempted to take hold of her.— Long afterwards, her speech had something wild, abrupt, and childish; but when she was a little civilized, she appeared to be a quick, lively girl. There was nothing from which she was more difficult to be weaned, than eating flesh and vegetables raw. Her stomach could not bear dressed victuals, so that she fell into one disease after another, though raw food was allowed her occasionally. Perhaps the change was attempted with too little caution. At first she was led by this propensity to play some laughable tricks. Once the Viscount had a great deal of company, and she sate at table with them. None of the thoroughly-dressed and high-seasoned dishes being to her taste, she started up, vanished like lightning, filled her apron with live frogs from the nearest pool, hastened back, and bestowed them among the guests with a liberal hand, joyfully exclaiming, as she distributed her agreeable present, “ here, here, take some.” It is easy to imagine how the company were delighted with the frogs hopping all over the plates and dishes, while the little wild girl, astonished at the slight estimation in which they seemed to hold her delicious morsels, busied herself in catching the frogs that leapt about the floor,

tion than another ; but that is to be accounted for from the difference in original situation, or the difference in the time or age at which they first become tenants of the forest. One has been born in the woods, or abandoned there, before he was properly conscious of his existence ; another has lost his way in a more advanced stage of infancy, or has been left by designing villainy a victim for destruction. In some, the difference has been occa-

and replacing them on the table. In the year 1732, this remarkable maiden was baptized by the name of Maria le Blanc. On account of the change in her mode of life she was often ill, and after the death of her patron, spent the remainder of her days in a convent.—How this child’ continues the account, “ came into that wild state, and in what country she was born, were circumstances which could never be known with certainty. It was conjectured, however, that she was by birth an Esquimaux, and brought to Europe in some ship ; for, when she had learnt to talk, she said that she had twice crossed the sea ; gave a description of boats, resembling those of the Esquimaux ; and once, when she was shewn a series of delineations of people of different countries, she seemed agreeably surprised on coming to that in which the Esquimaux were represented.”

In the year 1661, a boy was found, apparently about nine years old, in a forest in Lithuania, among the bears. He was well-made, and his countenance was pleasing, but he was ex-

sioned from their having, before discovery, passed the period at which every intellect, if suffered to follow the course of nature, drops into decay. They have been taught to speak, and to pursue those common occupations which require the exertion of memory alone, or for which little reason can be wanted; but before the properly mental powers could be called into action, the frigidity and callosity of

tremely wild. It proved impossible to tame him, and accustom him to the clothing or food of civilized men.

In 1694, a young man of twenty was found among a herd of bears in Lithuania likewise, on the frontiers of Russia. He is said to have been all over hairy, and to have walked on both hands and feet. He displayed very few marks of reason, had not any human voice, and was difficult to tame: by degrees, however, he learned to stand upright against a wall, eat common food, and to speak a little, though in a hoarse, unintelligible manner. He could not recollect any thing that had befallen him in his wild state.

There are particulars in some of these relations which will prove their objects to have been no idiots, and it is something remarkable, that there is no evidence that any child, however he may be supposed to be an idiot when found, was so when lost or abandoned. This leaves a fair influence to be drawn that the situation produced the ideotcy, and that in some cases it was prevented by fortunate accidents preserving the connexion between circumstances and the senses.

age have rendered every effort to revive or to elicit them ineffectual. It is in vain that the cavils of the innatists may attempt to overthrow the evidence for this part of our subject; instances almost innumerable, but too well known to be adduced, might be given of men and females, whom accidents have secluded from society, or misfortunes have determined to inhabit solitude which the tyrant man might never disturb by his intrusion.—Even these have lost their language and the exercise of every social faculty, and the evidence of eye-witnesses alone could have attested that they had ever before been in civilized situations.*

Ideots.—The undoubted fact that there are ideots, apparently from the birth, will be a

* Alexander Selkirk was an instance of this; and there was a woman discovered, not many months ago, in a mountainous district of France, whose parentage was remembered, and who could not utter a syllable.

great argument for the natural inferiority of some intellects. In common life and conversation a male idiot may be called a man in contradistinction to the other sex, but he cannot properly be considered as such, either by law or by philosophy. It is evident that some part of the conformation of an idiot must have been destroyed, but whether in the womb, at the moment of parturition, or at what other precise period, cannot well be determined. However, from some defect in the conformation, or from no matter what cause, the capacity having had no time to shew itself, the man is lost to society. There would be, however, in my opinion, no more reason to accuse the idiot-born of want of capacity, if he had been able to exercise his faculties, than there would be to say that any of those men who have, as it were, become mad from excessive study and exertion, have had weaker capacities than others, because they lost their senses. Idiots-born have in no sense

either genius or capacity. The intellectual powers are clouded from their infancy, or rather they are mindless. Some have assigned as the cause of ideocy, a too hasty and a necessarily crude formation of the brain.—This was, however, without proof, and the brains of ideots have been found to be as perfect as those of some of the greatest philosophers. May not this calamity be occasioned by a negligence in the parent or the nurse, to excite the connexion between objects and the senses, which is necessary for the formation of the mind? If this be the case, no argument against mental equality can stand on so slender a foundation. But, as no exact cause has hitherto been alledged, so as to overthrow or to weaken our positions, it is sufficient for our present purpose to exclude ideots, whose capacities cannot be measured, since they neither have been nor can be manifested.

Mal-organization.—It may be considered necessary that we should pay some attention to what is called mal-organization, as that has been urged as a fatal obstacle to the original existence of an equality in capacities.—It may be observed, that scarcely any two children appear to be born alike in strength of body or organic formation; yet it may with great reason be doubted, that mal-organization or a difference in conformation, can affect that which is never known till it is perceived, and is only the production of circumstance. Long and tedious disputations have always existed respecting the seat of sense and understanding; and however accident may seem to show that the brain contains, or is the great assistant to, the intellect, I think that point by no means clearly determined. But supposing, as a foundation, that the brain is the seat of sense, let us see if it is from any thing but conjecture that to any mal-conformation of it a weakness in capacity can be attributed. If

we open the head of a man tolerably far advanced in years, and perceive any peculiarity in the organization of his brain; perhaps we may infer that it was to *that* his perpetual dulness and impenetrable stupidity was owing; but, as the formation of the brain is only *supposed* to have an effect upon the capacity, we may with equal, nay, I think, with more probability, argue, that the want of education, and the constant inactivity of the mental faculties, occasioned any peculiarity that may appear. Have we any reason to give, why that peculiarity in the brain should not have proceeded from the want of education? Is it possible that any peculiar mal-conformation can be discovered in the heads of men who have been remarkable for nothing, but have advanced in the same course, and with equal ability, with their fellow workmen and neighbours? If it be possible, then no mal-conformation can reasonably be called the cause of any man's stupidity. But, if it be not possi-

ble, as we will imagine for the sake of argument, we ask, if there was not an adequate cause for the man's stupidity, whose head contained such a mal-conformation, in the circumstances of his birth and education? If there were, and I am persuaded if things are well examined there will always be such found, then it is less according to the rules of sound argument and common sense to imagine the mal-conformation to be a cause, and thus to make two causes, than it would be to say that it was the effect of his stupidity.

Men, who for a long period, and constantly, have exercised their powers of thinking, and have, as it is generally expressed, thought deeply, have been found to have their brains, when opened, completely dry, and as it were, in a state of exhaustion; and yet it is known that the medical men present, rather conceived the peculiarities visible in such brains to have originated from the possessor's life of

study and application, than from an original formation before he exercised the powers of thinking. I am at a loss to understand then, why want of education, and of mental exertion, may not have a negative effect upon the brain, as great as the positive effect produced by the efforts of a philosopher. Neither the brain of a stupid man nor the brain of a philosopher need be opened, till they have shewn in their lives the properties for which they were remarkable; if they are opened before they have shewn themselves to be stupid or wise, no inference can be drawn on any question like the present.

To establish the position, that mal-conformation makes a difference in capacity, it must be proved that that mal-conformation existed before the capacity was exercised, and that it afterwards had the effect that seemed likely to ensue. All other attempts at proof are nothing but opinions; and if probable causes

for stupidity can be produced in the circumstances of education, and it cannot be proved that there was any peculiar conformation at the commencement of existence, the operation of the circumstances must be acknowledged by all sensible men, as well in the mal-conformation, as in the actions which could not have happened otherwise. There are, however, peculiar mal-conformations of the faculties, or rather obscurations of the senses, which will materially tend to cramp the capacity, but which leave it reasonable to suppose that the possessor would have been equally open to the operation of circumstances with other men, if they had not existed. The boy of the name of Mitchell, born deaf and dumb, respecting whom Mr. Dugald Stewart has published so elegant and entertaining an account, showed, in process of time, that it only required the faculties of which he was deprived, to acquire information with facility; that, in fact, his capacity was equal to that of any

other person, but that his privations were so many barriers to its exercise. That such mal-organizations may thwart the operation of circumstances, is a flimsy argument, on which the innatists may for a moment endeavour to support themselves; but they will find this fail them also, if they do not deny that those privations may be occasioned by the neglect of ignorant people to perform necessary and common operations. Physicians will inform them, that these obstacles to the exercise of the senses are produced by accidents of pregnancy and parturition; and that most of them, if not all, might be removed, if their existence were early noticed.

Physiognomy.—Our doctrine may be fairly considered as subversive of physiognomy, craniology, and of any or all systems by which the original form of the face, head, or other part of the body, is made indicative of the disposition or capacity; some observations

may therefore be necessary to the theory of Messrs. Gall and Spurzheim, as well as a few words to the followers of Lavater. To the latter, however, we shall not pay particular attention.

Lavater, and the generality of physiognomists, have considered it necessary to found their doctrines on certain arguments for the innate superiority of the capacity, or original perfection of the genius.* But the supporters of such arguments will find themselves aimed at in the present work with sufficient particularity to prevent my entering into any direct survey of their reasoning. As a system of

* Not only do physiognomists say that man is *endowed* with dispositions and capacities, but that the faculty of physiognomizing is born with the possessor. As a proof of this, I refer my readers to a Mr. Pernetty, a learned physiognomist, who says that that faculty is “not acquired, but innate, and no man can be a physiognomist unless he has a knowledge of the science as a gift from the Deity!” Lavater himself says, that a physiognomist should be a “well shaped, handsome man!”

prognostication, it seems to me to be entirely without foundation. What connexion can a hooked nose, or peculiar mouth, have with the future life of a person who is not yet determined in the path he is to pursue? Circumstances may change the features and give a look of majesty to the countenance,* but no line of argument, no establishment of principles, however logical in themselves or plausible in their appearance, can make a

* There are many living who may have remembered Napoleon Buonaparte in the infancy of his political career. Some I have heard mention their having seen him shortly after his leaving the military school at Brienne. They described his face as then simple, mild, and ingenuous, and were astonished themselves when they again beheld him in all the pride of imperial magnificence. His countenance was no longer as it had been. It was that of a man determined, but collected; and capable of combining the heterogeneous qualities of dignity and activity. The monarch was there as well as the commander, but so gracefully united, that the one could not be separated from the other without compromising the grandeur of the whole. Physiognomists might say, that this was a proof of the goodness of Napoleon's motives. I leave that to the world to decide: I mention the fact, without any sinister intention.

child a philosopher from the largeness of his forehead, or a general from the brightness of his eye. As a method of knowing the passions from the present appearance of the countenance, I allow physiognomy its full merit, for the passions form the features, and so far it does not interfere with our positions.

Craniology.—But the most singular doctrine, which we consider as particularly affected by our arguments, is that of professor Gall, who has at no very distant period contrived to find a partner entering with equal enthusiasm with himself into his interminable visions. The professor divides the brain into various regions, which his microscopic eyes have enabled him to discover, though they have been hitherto unknown to anatomists of the dead body. He has therefore found various properties in the cerebrum and cerebellum, of which an acquaintance with the living head could alone furnish him with the

developement. In the regions already mentioned, he distributes the *organs*, as he calls them, of philoprogenitiveness, of murder, covetiveness, and an immense variety of propensities, which are all laid down and described with the care of an accurate observer.—The erudite dissector of the brain declares that he can find, by indentions on the outside of the skull produced by the internal developement of the organs, particular dispositions and inclinations, and he pretends that he has compared skulls with such minuteness of observation, as to be able to distinguish what part wit, courage, and lasciviousness, &c. inhabit.

At first we shall content ourselves with a few unconnected remarks, and then submit to our readers as patient an examination of the system as we can make, or they endure. In the first place, we must have it proved that the skulls which the learned doctor exhibits

did really once belong to General Wurmser, Blumauer, and Alxinger, and all those learned and intrepid persons to whom they are attributed. Then he must show, as it has been already objected with great force and judgment against his doctrine,* that no man ever existed with indentions without the qualities they are said to accompany. Next, he must demonstrate that those people who have received injuries on the head without perceiving any material mental alteration on their recovery, have not had their skulls in the smallest degree indented, whilst those who have from a fall, or by a blow, altered the conformation of their capital bones, have lost their senses, or acquired considerable intellectual improvement. He must make it out clearly to common understandings, that

* Monthly Magazine, May 1806. For a good account of the system, see the same work for April in that year; where will be found a correct plate of the indentions. There is also a short and intelligible survey of the system in that well-conducted miscellany for January and February, 1805.

the seat of sense is not, as Van Helmont argued, in the pit of the stomach, or in the heart, as another learned philosopher asserted. We must know likewise, if a person lose his senses by a fall from his horse, whether the alteration in the skull caused his insanity, or it was occasioned by the complete derangement of the nervous system; and we must be certain that such a person would recover his senses, in case the portion of the skull supposed to be displaced should be restored to its former situation.

But these are trifles to many of the objections that are to come. If the organs do at all exist, we must have a learned dissertation to show why a man who possesses the organ of murder, does not exercise his bloody faculty till he is sixty or seventy years of age, when all organs must be on the decline. We must trouble the doctor to inform us of the substantial difference betwixt the crimes in the

case of one man murdered from an ambush, and ten thousand slaughtered on the field of battle.* When he has shown us this, we will ask him if the soldiers who slew, and the soldiers who were slain, had any more murderous organs, if we except their muskets and their cannon, than those which are possessed by millions of sober citizens? Is it true that every man possesses such an organ when a whole nation rises in defence of its rights, and for the preservation of its liberties; when

* I am fully aware of the arguments which have often been advanced to prove that the slaughter of war was less criminal than the murders committed by banditti, whilst the latter were comparatively innocent in their consequences. Throwing these out of the question however, I think, supposing the determination to kill to be allowed, the argument against the system is unanswerable. The word of command is given undoubtedly before they fire or charge, but soldiers must have contemplated bloodshed before they assumed the musket, and it would be no defence of a murder to produce an order for its perpetration.

[It will be easily perceived that this observation was written on the supposition that the murdering propensity was a distinct faculty, as Dr. Gall supposed, and not the excessive exercise of one, as Dr. Spurzheim has since determined: the observations here made, are still applicable, however, to the general doctrine.]

they swear on the swords of their independence, that they will destroy the disturbers of their peace? Have all the Arabs of the desert the thieving organ, which seems necessary to enable plunderers to be successful?—Are the thieves and other criminals who are discharged from the public prison of Pennsylvania as *reformed, and capable of becoming worthy members of society*, relieved from the oppression of the indention which carried them into bondage?

Though we do consider that accidental alterations in the organization of the senses may intercept the mind in its progress, and turn it into a different direction, we can never for a moment entertain such a ridiculous opinion, as that any organization of the unexercised faculties can take place in the womb, still less that such an internal organization could direct a man through an ocean where he is the fool of circumstance, liable to be

overwhelmed by every wave, and borne away by every hurricane. A thousand accidents might change the arrangement of the organs irrecoverably. A person who appeared to possess every qualification for an accomplished musician, might be suddenly disappointed in his views by a deafness, unforeseen and unavoidable; and he who had acquired the eloquence of Demosthenes, might lose his voice in the perpetuated huskiness of a cold. But what would become of the organs of the musician and the orator, if these misfortunes suddenly metamorphosed them into a surgeon and a mathematician? Perhaps the doctor may here condescend to inform us, that his system enables the student to discover prominent features in the character, as wit, courage, and sprightliness, but he seldom descends to describe the profession, by marks on the occiput, or the forehead. We shall imagine, then, a man of the greatest possible depth of thought, (and surely this is general enough for the method

of indention;) we shall conceive him to be 'fore all the world, like Godwin's Mr. Falkland, learned, generous, and jealous of honor, like a knight of the days of chivalry. Suppose that this gentlemen should commit a murder, and, after some time spent in remorse and regret, should lose his reason through horror at his crime; where then is the indention that signified depth of thought? Is it succeeded by one indicative of insanity; or does it remain unaltered and uneffaced? It may be the doctor's opinion, that a madman can think deeply; but, though he may have done so in some few remarkable instances, it would be impossible, I fear, to persuade the world in general, that a man totally deprived of his reason could argue well, even in favor of the system of craniology.

The doctor has collected a number of the skulls of animals, which he describes as having possessed various properties whilst

living, such as thieving, ferocity, &c.;—now, we should be glad to be informed, whether mad dogs have the indention of ferocity, and whether magpies and cats have the marks which designate thieving and rapine? If the latter possess the indentions which the doctor thinks demonstrate their qualities, will he point out to us the difference betwixt a cat or a magpie taking any thing in their way, and a rational being handling his own property. Can the doctor, even with the help of all imaginable German gravity, call that thieving which is the consequence of instinct? If he do, he would try and condemn an idiot for picking his pocket, or pulling down his fence.* But these indications of various properties and mental qualifications have no better support,

* The thief is only made criminal by the regulations of society; in fact, where property belongs to no individual, it is equally accessible by all, and where no law threatens, no action can be offensive. If the doctor then can prove a magpie a thief, he may prove the cat a murderer, and then his system will be something nearer a firm establishment than at present.

than had the dreams with which Lavater intoxicated himself, and puzzled his disciples. On what does the Gallian philosophy depend? Is it not on the separate and distinct existence of the organs of the brain? If these organs find a place in the brain of Dr. Gall, I am sorry to say that they are possessed by no head but his own; anatomists and probability equally deny their existence, and every attempt at demonstration on such a subject, is the first step towards defeat.*

Thus far I had proceeded in making a cur-

* If Dr. Gall can consider that a person who makes an alteration in his intellect, effects it by an indention such as he has every where described, he would surely allow the efficacy of bandages on the heads of children to form their minds as the person wishes by whom they may be bound. Now, we are well certified of a disciple of the doctor having bound the heads of his infant children so as to resemble those of some of the greatest heroes and philosophers of antiquity! Will the doctor admit this as a proof of the truth or fallacy of his doctrine? If he will; the result, if favorable, will be published to the world; but if it be not published, we may fairly suppose the doctor defeated, and his system "a rhapsody of words."

sory investigation into the original system of Dr. Gall; what examination I have room and inclination for, I shall now pursue upon the last view of the system by Dr. Spurzheim.

The doctor founds the system upon assumptions relative to innateness*; these, therefore, it is necessary that we should first consider. In answer to Helvetius, or with an intention of answering him, he exclaims, with a confidence which is not new to the supporters of such doctrines, “how many children are “exposed to the same influences without manifesting the same energy of faculties?”†—The answer to this question is so plain, that I need scarcely silence it by a negative. Does the doctor give us any one instance, where a child was *exposed*, as he calls it, to the same influences with a poet, philosopher, or histori-

* So does Dr. Gall; but we have mentioned the former exclusively, as we are, during the remainder of our observations on craniology, solely occupied with his view of the system.

† See page 62 of the system.

an, without becoming, in his turn, a poet, historian, or philosopher? Will he call to mind the truth which may be controverted, but cannot be overturned: “that no two children can receive the same education,”* and its consequences, that no two children can be exactly similar in disposition, genius, or ability?—Though many boys are educated in the same school, there may have happened circumstances before their arrival, which have given a turn to their disposition, and to the manner as well as matter of their studies; and even if that were not the case, there is always some mark of favor and affection, or repulsion and dislike, between the master and the scholar or his fellow pupils, and the action of such favor or dislike on the temper and inclinations of

* Helvetius. I must intreat pardon if I am thought in any way to have imitated the work of that philosopher; it was not till I had arrived at this part that I knew the course he had taken. I have since examined his writings, and think it will be perceived, that, however we may in some points agree, I am not indebted to him for any of my positions.

youth is almost incredible, were it not fully known and acknowledged. The effect of repulsion from some party, and affection towards a rival, or of parental indulgence, or indulgence at home by some person, was evident in the anecdote we related of the boy who had been unwilling, rather than unable, to learn his alphabet. Let us imagine an instance of similarity of education, for the sake of argument, which never, as far as I have known, came within the sphere of probability. Let us suppose that two twins were educated in the same academy, and received with the same degree of favor by the master and the scholars, and yet that the one should be far superior to the other in intellectual vigor and literary attainments.* To what circumstance, then, are we to look for the inequality of in-

* Our readers will see that this case is impossible; for the least accidental shade of difference in learning, causes a difference in reception from the master, frequently imperceptible to himself.

telleet? To the nurse? They were nursed by the same woman! Yet, even in this case, which cannot possibly exist, I defy Dr. Gall, and all the innatists that ever lived, to prove that the degrees of intellect and information might not have proceeded from accident, and from that only.

The doctor has mingled the proofs of his doctrine in such a manner, that we are sometimes at a loss to conceive what he would support by his arguments. He insists, with considerable energy, upon something like national analogy, which he calls constancy of the human character. His assertion is, that human knowledge is limited, and that, though “the chief is crowned in some countries with
“feathers, and in others clothed with purple,” the manners, and of course the minds of all nations, are essentially the same. No man, he says, has acquired any new faculty, nor can he lose any which he has acquired;

but will this be considered an argument less favourable to my doctrine than to his; is it likely to happen sooner, the mind being innate, than if it were the production of circumstances? Is it to be expected that any new faculty can be acquired, when we know that every human faculty of which we can have any conception has already been developed? Is not every thing new that we discover, only a novel mode of exercising powers almost coeval with creation? If mankind attained to perfection in the art of flying, would the doctor call it a new faculty? Motion is a faculty, but flying is only its adaptation to an uncommon purpose. And why have mankind continued so many ages almost stationary in their progress towards happiness and perfection? Is it because they are innate, that our faculties are unimproveable; or is it not rather that we have continued the same, circumstances being similar; that we have not altered, because no new situation

has offered for our adoption? By the general analogy of nations, the doctor, like the defenders of the slave trade, seems to consider the human faculties unchangeable, because for a considerable period unchanged.— But is there not a likelihood, at some glorious æra, of our breaking the shackles that bind us to the circle in which we move, and rushing forward in a straight line towards that advancement in every thing which can make life desirable, and which will demonstrate that the human mind is as unlimited as eternity? As I consider all capacities as equal at the birth, and believe superiority of genius to be a wall by which the learned have selfishly surrounded the talents for which they are admired, I do firmly expect that some *spiritus mundi*, as I may call it, some mighty effort of universal genius, improved by the increase of population, the advancement of civilization, and the consequent addition to favorable circumstance, will set us all forward

on the boundless expanse of science, and prove at once the fallacy of the doctor's opinion, which would set limits to our knowledge, and reduce us to a level with the baboon, or the quadruped we employ. Are mankind to be always the same, because they have been so for a few hundred years, as far as we can retrace? Presumptuous insect! darest thou to compare the circumstances of a moment with immensurable and unknown eternity? Look around thee into the immensity of time; and think how foolish and how imbecile thou wert, to call that constancy which was but an instant of mutability!

The doctor then proceeds to examine the powers of various animals, and one would almost imagine he had been studying with great attention that curious system, which would prove, if it could, that all beings were but modifications of one another, and that the hyssop on the wall might in time become

a naturalist, like him who was so fond of investigating its properties,—so constantly does he perplex us with strange and unexpected comparisons and deductions from dogs, cats, sheep, and every animal, domestic or otherwise, with a wise intention of proving the origin of their actions to be organic, as he makes those of the human species. A few observations will sufficiently show the singularity of his mode of philosophizing. “A “dog,” he says, “cannot hunt if it be shut “up, but its desire of hunting is not produced by leading it into the fields!” By what, then, is the desire of hunting created? Does the doctor abandon a good and reasonable cause for none at all? By this method of reasoning, a child does not wish to run after a butterfly because he sees it, but because there is in him an innate propensity for following such an insect! Probably it is intended that we should imagine the hunting of either hares or butterflies to be a separate or-

ganic propensity ! Dogs, it should be observed, do not hunt when they are first taken into the field, but require considerable training ; it is true they run up and down, and it might happen, if they were to start a hare or a rabbit, that they would bound after it ; but they have as little a natural propensity for hunting, as there exists a natural antipathy between the horse and his driver, or the landlord and his tenant. The kitten, when young, gambols after a ball of thread, and if a mouse were to come in her way, she might toss it about in the same manner as she did the clue, but it is well known that a mouse does not endanger its life by running into the path of a kitten in her playful moments ; if it escape not, it may receive a tumble or a disagreeable squeeze ; but kittens have, in my own observation, been as much frightened of mice, as mice were eager to avoid, not what were naturally their enemies, but what they were afraid of, because they were larger, and of

course more to be feared than their own species. The ass has sometimes, he says, immediately after birth, approached the food which was best adapted for it, in preference to other plants by which it was surrounded. But is it true that there is one species of food particularly ordained for one kind of animal? Certainly when animals are in a wild state, they generally have, according to their species, a particular method of procuring their subsistence; but we read of instances of animals which have fared in a completely different manner from their species, with different climate and situation. The dogs of Otaheite lived entirely upon vegetables, and formed a principal article of provision for the islanders;*

* “I cannot much commend the flavour of their fowls; but we all agreed that a South-sea dog was little inferior to an English lamb. Their excellence is probably owing to their being kept up and fed wholly on vegetables”—*Hawkesworth's Voyages.*

This passage would seem to infer that the animals were compelled by confinement to feed on vegetables; but I have another paragraph in my recollection which confirms me in the opinion

and a cat may be brought up without the least gratification of its carnivorous propensity. Can it, then, be believed, that animals will proceed naturally, and immediately after birth, to a particular plant for nourishment? If such were the case, they would perish sooner than have recourse to any other vegetable. But if we admit that this fact is true and authenticated, the doctor will be driven in the end to allow that the animal which is thus perceived to run towards its natural provision, is unconscious of its action, that it follows the direction of an unintellectual instinct, and that its motions are altogether automatic and involuntary;* and if

that all the dogs in the island, in whatever situation, were herbivorous. I am sorry I cannot immediately refer to it, as it likewise attributed to the dogs an European origin. It is plain, however, by this quotation, that dogs *can* be fed on vegetables, which at least implies that flesh is not their exclusively natural provender.

* I am in great doubt respecting the fact of animals having preferred the food generally used by their species, to any other

such actions are performed without thought, what connexion can they have with organs

which might be presented to them. In a wild state, an experiment to prove such a fact is scarcely practicable; and to animals domesticated, great art might be employed to cause them to make the attributed preference. They might be brought forth into, or trained up in the neighbourhood of some particular vegetation. Poisonous plants I do not consider so much pernicious by nature, as they are discordant with the vegetables on which the animals they injure had been accustomed to be fed. When wild, there is scarcely any inferior animal which the carnivorous species will not eat, and the exceptions are only such as are offensive to some of their senses. Experiments on the modes of living of domestic animals are extremely deceitful; those who have the care of them, seldom permit them to have food different in any way from that which is given to them according to the general treatment. When they do by accident eat vegetables to which they are not commonly accustomed, effects directly contrary to the conclusion that would be drawn by the philosopher have frequently resulted. Horses often eat hemlock without apparent injury; and Linnæus has, I think, erroneously made this a characteristic of the species. It is my opinion, that any race of animals might be taught to live on any food whatever, and no man ought to be so presumptuous as to declare any one plant or animal to be the aliment of a particular species, unless he could show, from indisputable evidence, that the race has from creation subsisted on that plant or animal, and has not been driven by circumstances to adopt a provender different from that with which it was originally provided. There are many well-authenticated instances on record, of men having lived and fattened upon drugs which to

which, from the doctor's system, are either the causes or the effect of cogitation? Why

others were deadly poison, and their extraordinary constitutions bore evident signs of having been produced by the singular circumstances into which they had thrown themselves. And yet, if fifty men should be discovered almost subsisting on corrosive sublimate for fifty generations, no one would be foolish enough to say that that was their *natural* food, or their *natural* beverage, because they used no other!

I have said that animals of the carnivorous kind devour in general every thing they can master. I believe it is sufficiently well authenticated, that the line, "the tiger preys not on the tiger brood," is erroneous, and that tigers destroy their own species whenever they are by disease or accident unable to defend themselves. Cats do not catch mice naturally. The mother has been frequently observed to teach the kitten how to hunt, and to accustom it to the food to which she herself had early been accustomed. There are many cats which will kill mice, but do not eat them, because those in whose houses they live, give them provision in itself more delicate, and in its attainment less troublesome. Mice have been found in the traps torn to pieces, when no cats could be near, and the laceration could only be attributed to rats or their own species; and there was less probability of the former than the latter.

It is strange that men should have often overlooked such plain proofs that many of the actions of brutes are produced from circumstances solely, as are every day before their eyes. I could tell Dr. Gall and Dr. Spurzheim many instances of cats having been brought up without their mothers, which, in the words of some to whom they belonged, "were good for nothing." Their limbs had not that pliancy which kittens have that have

is it, then, that he so curiously mixes the actions of men and animals; that he so ridiculously confounds genius, which can never be discovered till reason shines high in the intellectual horizon, with instinctive actions, with which reason has no connexion? I am satisfied that the child, almost immediately after birth, seeks the breast, which is for a time its natural nourishment. All mankind, all the animal creation, possess these instincts; but, in the name of God, let not the meanest actions of the meanest reptiles be compared with the grand exertions of humanity.

What the doctor has observed in this part of *his* subject, it is plain, can prove nothing

been kept near the parent cat; they could not catch a mouse or a bird, and seemed ignorant of the intention of Providence in their creation.

I have only here enumerated a very few facts, which have nearly all fallen under my own observation; others I could relate, but these are sufficient at present to show how ridiculous a man must make himself by *asserting* that animals have a particular food assigned to them by nature.

further than the existence of instinct; it is impossible for him to establish the innateness of any actions, but those which appear to be automatic; for all the rest, he must seek an origin in education. We might have expected opposition in this assertion, if we had not discovered that it is the doctor's own opinion.

“The actions of animals are not confined
“solely to what their preservation requires;
“they are susceptible of several modifications;
“*they modify their manners according to the*
“*position wherein they live; they are suscep-*
“*tible of an education beyond their wants!*”*

What are we to understand from this sentence? Is not the only just inference, that no animal is susceptible of any modification of its actions, but what is the result of education? Thus does the profound craniologist, by his words, disprove the probability of innateness, and establish the effect of circumstances that he denies!

* The system, p. 69.

Before we leave this part of the subject, we would ask the doctor, why, if he wishes to establish his system collaterally by an examination of the faculties of animals, he has been almost totally silent on the inhabitants of the waters? The only passages in which I can find fishes particularly mentioned, are those in which he gives an incidental notice on the cuttle-fish, and erroneously denominates the whale the monarch of the deep. In numerous instances, fish have determinate character enough to claim a place in the voluminous and entertaining developement of his theory. Does he find that fish have no peculiar capital indention, or what is the reason that they deserve no particular notice? The reason, I imagine, will be found in the impossibility to reconcile many of them to the system; for they are little distinguished from each other, except by their destructive or beneficial properties, which are no greater evidence of disposition, than the claws of the ti-

ger, or the trunk of the elephant, are of the sagacity or fierceness of their respective possessors.

The doctor says, that revolutions do not produce faculties or genius, but “offer opportunities and subjects necessary to the faculties.” But let not this be said, when it is recollected, that the downfall and the erection of empires *have been caused* by the very great men whom the doctor has described as acquiring celebrity and improving their faculties by revolutions. Is there any ‘*new faculty*’ elicited by a revolution? Why is it that the doctor believes the propensity for revolutionizing to be innate? Can he show that a revolution ever took place, without being produced by a long concatenation of political circumstances, which rendered it inevitable? By what reasoning, then, can he prove, by what fact can he establish the assertion, that a great man, who effects a revolution, was born

to do it, any further than because circumstances threw him into a peculiar situation, and he effected it with success? The doctor will say, that the faculties such a man exercised, existed before the revolution he occasioned, but an opportunity was never till then offered for their manifestation. Where is the proof that they ever before existed? If Buonaparte had died before the French revolution raised him into eminence, would not the man be considered insane, who should say that that person possessed such and such extraordinary powers, but they were never brought into action? Such a line of argument would prove, if it could prove any thing, that the most miserable fanatic, the most pitiful enthusiast, who said he would bring about a revolution in government or religion, had the ability to effect those purposes, but he was never allowed an opportunity! Such an argument would change the mad Brothers into Mahomet, Dr. Gall into Locke or Sir Isaac Newton, and the

King of the beggars into the Emperor of China !*

The doctor has asserted with great confidence, that the social faculties are not at all the result of society. Man may be better adapted by a long course of years to society than retirement ; but I do not think that the institutions of society could arise from any thing but circumstance. The mind is moulded entirely by contingencies ; and there is a sufficient number of instances of hermits, to prove that the sentiments called social, are ac-

* It may seem necessary, whilst I am ridiculing the idea of any man's possessing faculties which he does not exercise, that I should remove from my own doctrine the stigma I am casting on another. The argument on which I found my essay is, that opportunity only is necessary to make any man what favorable circumstances have made his neighbour. It is only, therefore, against the occult faculties that I am arguing.

Dr. Spurzheim, in this passage, throws himself dreadfully open ; if he mean that every man has hidden powers which it only requires opportunity to exercise, he must be of my opinion as to the universality of original genius ; it is only on the question of innateness that we differ !

quired in society. The regret at leaving a populous city, or a well cultivated neighbourhood, is only produced by long custom, and the cessation at once of numerous actions which man in society requires from his fellow, but which are in solitude superfluous and unnecessary. If society were our natural state, why did we not always live in cities? The question of man being social, is ridiculous; and impossible to be decided. Till we can arrive at a decision, therefore, we shall consider mankind as social or solitary, as circumstances make him.* “If society produced,” says the doctor, “any number of the faculties of man and animals, every kind of social animal ought to possess them.” Why is this? Did ever metaphysician use a sophism so palpable? Because human society produ-

* The word *social* comes from *society*, not the latter from the former; and when we say, a sunny bank, a red rock, or a social man, we do not say that these are naturally and innately what they are, but allow, when we mention them, that circumstances might have made them otherwise.

ces the social faculties of man, is it a necessary consequence that bees or beavers, which exist in societies *separate from man*, should have the faculties which he possesses? Are not the actions of bees and beavers evidently instinctive? Why again confound instinct with reason, till we are perplexed in a labyrinth of sophistry that we would burn sooner than unravel? Is there any faculty that society may not be said to have produced? No; the fact is proved from the doctor's own instance of the girl of Champagne, already related.*

* See note, page 55. If the story of a girl found in Champagne, which we have given, be the story to which he alludes, (see the system, page 74) I think it is plainly established that the mind is nothing without society: indeed, the doctor seems to acknowledge this in his own observation in the page preceding (73) "However, if a well organized individual, who has "escaped in his infancy, be discovered in a forest, though he cannot be acquainted with our manners and determinate education, yet he will manifest the essential and characteristic faculties of mankind; and such an individual *living in society, will soon imitate the manners and receive the instruction of others.*—"The girl of Champagne proves this." We wish to know from

Much of what we have said, and indeed almost all our arguments relative to Dr. Gall's system, are in a great measure connected with genius, as well as capacity. Those which we have used, we considered as indispensable in this part of the work; but there are others which have been suggested by the system, of which we shall postpone the consideration,

the doctor what essential and characteristic faculties were manifested in this instance, that had any connexion with, and had not been produced by society? It was evident from her own conversation, when she was able to talk, that she had been in other situations; and there was no reason to assert that she exercised any other faculties than those she had acquired from former recollections, for her own defence: indeed, the very necessity for defence might have produced these faculties.

If these wild people are ideots, how is it that they have managed to subsist themselves, when the doctor has said, (page 65) "the ideot makes no effort in order to prevent the injuries of the air, and to preserve himself." It has been generally doubted, whether the persons supposed to have been secluded were ideots, or men who could in time be made rational beings.—For, say one party, if a man were to be left in a wood before he could speak, how did he preserve life, even if in other circumstances he might have in time become rational? If an ideot, how he could procure himself clothing and subsistence, becomes still a question of considerable difficulty. We cannot imagine that man would, in a state of nature and seclusion, be incapable

till we arrive at that part of our essay which relates more particularly to genius. At present, we shall confine ourselves to a brief examination of the organs, which, however deficient it may seem in the eyes of a surgeon, will be quite sufficient for our present purpose.

The organ of amateness is said to exist in the cerebellum, and the doctor's proof for

of procuring himself food such as came in his way, without denying him the faculties we allow to the brute creation, when only instinctive and automatic motions are perceptible. As to the girl of Champagne having been in part covered with skins, it is well known that the principle of imitation has been perceived to operate before a child was able to utter distinct sounds, or any thing like words; and the girl having crossed the sea, may have adopted almost unconsciously the covering, or something like the clothing, used by the people of the country whence she came. It has been said with respect to idiots not coming for their food, or paying any regard to external covering, that such is the conduct of those who have been accustomed to be called to their victuals, or have been clothed without having any occasion to pay attention to their necessities; but it is hardly to be imagined that any idiot would seek food uncalled to it, whilst he would not seek it in situations where there are constant opportunities afforded him of learning when it is necessary; though at every meal he is still as ignorant as on the first day of his ideocy or his birth.

its existence is, that men, and male animals in general, have their cerebella larger, while they are more addicted to venery than the females. We believe it contrary to fact that men have larger cerebella than women, but if it be true, it is entirely contradicted as far as relates to the doctor's argument, by the actions and conduct of the latter. Cats, when caterwauling, he says, have the neck much larger than commonly, and much heated; I know, on the contrary, that the necks of cats have been felt, when the animals were caterwauling, no larger than at other times, and perfectly cold!

The organ of pli-lo-pro-ge-ni-tive-ness comes next; it is a hard word, but the doctor gives us sufficient *reason* for its adoption.—The account of this organ is as amusing as the rest of his work; but, by some singular and unaccountable neglect, we are not informed that the animals possess it, which he

instances as endowed with the qualities it is supposed to engender ! From partial wants or total deficiencies in these organs, we earnestly recommend the doctor to endeavour to establish a system explanatory of the phenomena relative to impotence and sterility ; it will brighten the fame he has already made immortal. Dr. Spurzheim contradicts the opinion of Dr. Gall, that the want of an organ can produce an opposite temper to that of the persons who possess it, and contends, that to enable a man to have an opposite character, it is required that he should have a positive organ of a contrary tendency.— This means, if we can understand it, a kind of negativo-positive organ. If there is any truth in the arguments of either, however, we consider the original system to be right. But how an opposite alteration can take place in a character, and the person can be all at once a murderer of children, who had the greatest affection for his own and for those of other

people, we have no satisfactory information. Such cases have happened, and as both the learned doctors seem to imply that an absolute change in the skull from one organ to another is impossible, and that the penitentiary keepers may labor all their lives but they never can properly and completely reform a thief, we are left in a difficulty from which none but two such profound German philosophers can extricate us.

Supposing that a gentleman has a friend to whom he is enthusiastically attached, and that that friend nearly ruins him in property, and destroys his character, hitherto unblemished; he is naturally tired of the world which had so glaringly exhibited its perfidy towards him, and he retires to some remote corner of a distant country, far from the habitations of deceitful man, unknowing and unknown. Does such a person retain the organ of adhesiveness or friendship, or does it gradually di-

minish and finally disappear. If it remain, I suppose the doctor would say it was exercised by an attachment to retirement! If this be the case, have all men the same organs originally?—or, how happens it that they have such a variety of application? For, if all men have not the same organs, then almost all are attached to some object animate or inanimate, or to some particular pursuit; almost all are fond of some dear wife or mistress; of a pleasant habitation, a beautiful horse, or a favorite tree which the owner's infant hands have planted; and if an adhesiveness or friendship is shewn without the possession of the organ, an organ for such purposes is useless, and we must deny its existence. But if such an organ do exist in the heads of all men, it remains with the doctor to show how it could vanish as soon as the poison of hatred took possession of the mind, instead of the balm of friendship, which was before predominant. I do not give him the

liberty of proving a gradual disappearance.— It must be demonstrated that the organ had begun to be less prominent before the change of disposition, or that change becomes the cause, and not the effect, of any alteration in the skull that may be occasioned. The doctor is remarkably prudent in saying that for this organ there is little evidence; for if it do exist, it will involve the system in considerable perplexity. Every man must possess it, whether his talent be for music, for painting, for horse-racing, or craniology; and the organ of language, and all the other organs which imply any attachment to object or profession, are only circumstantial modifications!

It was, no doubt, with triumph, that the doctor discovered that weak little boys were fond of fighting, and strong ones desired peace. He searched for the organ of combativeness, and he joyfully perceived that it existed in the boys who fought, and it was

not in the heads of those who were averse from fighting. It is more than probable that the differences in the skull were occasioned by the differences in conduct, and those being consequent upon circumstances, they cannot be produced by organization. Had the nations of Lacedæmon and Scandinavia, who were educated for the sword, and had no minds but in the contest, the organ of combativeness, on which the doctor so strenuously insists? If they had, were their dispositions formed by the predominance of the organs, or by the peculiar circumstances which obliged them to become military to preserve their independence? Respecting this organ, I shall trespass no further on the patience of the reader, as I am well persuaded a private examination of its merits will sufficiently prove it neither to exist nor to be necessary.

It is incumbent on the doctor to prove that the boys who have pulled their toys to pieces

when young, to see what was within, or how they were constructed, were possessed in their infancy of the organ of destructiveness, but afterwards lost it in the organ of constructiveness, when they became ingenious mechanics. The doctor may contradict us, and assert that a man can possess at the same time these two discordant organs, and both can be prominent, and visible to common observation! One must be predominant, or both must be in equal and contradictory action. If the latter be the case, the system is absurd; if the former, it is contrary to common sense, because the organ which is dormant is as strongly perceptible on the outside of the skull as when it is in exercise. If this be true, and it is a conclusion fairly drawn from an impartial examination of the system, where is it possible to find any proof of a person's being prompted to a particular action by any one exclusive and distinguishably separate organ? The man that has the organ of *destructiveness*, may be

constructing from its direction, and the doctor may be entirely mistaken in the seat and disposition of his organs. The organ of fear, which caused people to run away from a boxer, may have been really the organ of combativeness in a dormant state; and that of combativeness, nothing else but the want of that of fear. A man that was courageous in one instance, will flee from one by whom he suspects he will be beaten; and if he have two organs, how will it be proved which *caused* the trepidation, and which occasioned its possessor to stand undaunted against his antagonist? Suppose that a man has three or four organs tolerably developed; that the organ of combativeness, one of the number, is more evident than the rest, and that he, being of a combative disposition, in a quarrel kills one of his fellow creatures; is the death of the man the consequence of the exertion of the organ of combativeness?—or, does not that organ, with the celerity of a harlequin, give

place to his destructive brother, who steps in without a moment's warning, and performs the office assigned to him by Dr. Gall? But move out of the way, Messrs. Assault and Murder, there is another gentleman organ desirous of preventing himself from becoming useless. The organ of covetiveness stops the exercise of the other organs, sends them to sleep without a soporific, and directs the man's fingers to the pockets of his fallen antagonist. This organ is then upon the full stretch for a purse, or something valuable, but, to its disappointment, nothing is discovered but a piece of biscuit. The organ of hunger is instantly put in motion; but that is nothing, on a minute investigation, but the eldest son of the organ of covetiveness; the organ of eating does its duty, but what can it be but a child, or perhaps a modification, of the organ of destructiveness! How are all these contradictions, interpositions, and interruptions of organs to be accounted for?—or,

rather, is there any end of them, but with the last page of such a system? Twenty organs may be in exercise at the same moment, and who is to decide upon their situation but Omnipotence? Improve our knowledge! The doctor may do so, but it is in vain to attempt it by the theory of craniology; he may increase our information by improving and arranging our original ideas, but he cannot advance one step nearer towards perfection, by creating a motley mass of disorganized confusion.

If a man kill a rat, he must have the organ of destructiveness; nay, without such an organ no person can comfortably eat his dinner! I am of opinion, likewise, that all men must be possessed of the organ of language, for we are not informed that it did not exist in the heads of the wild men whom we have already enumerated. If it should be found in the heads of such men, then it had no connexion with language in those who have the power

of utterance. If it were not found in their heads, however, there is a fair inference that circumstances occasioned its absence, and that it would have been there if those unfortunate people had been born and educated in a civilized country.* Let any rational and candid person then, after having made an examination of the system of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, say if all men have not the organs of covetiveness, adhesiveness, combativeness, destructiveness, constructiveness, and language, as well as almost every other organ enumerated or hinted at; and if he come to this conclusion, which to us appears inevitable, how happens it that scarcely any two men have their heads exactly similar in conformation, though the extraordinary exercise of one organ

* The doctor, it is evident, means to imply that every person but those who do not speak have the organ of language, for he attributes the silence of monkies to their want of that organ, and he relates instances of women who could not speak when they had such an organic deficiency.

over another very seldom, if ever, produces an extraordinary developement.

It is plain, from this circumstance, that there is scarcely a possibility of perceiving any particular disposition by a mark or marks on the skull of an individual. If the doctor examine the head of a county gaoler, who is also the county hangman,* and find a part of the skull manifestly protruding beyond the ordinary distance, he may conceive that protrusion to be the organ of destructiveness, but may not that as well be considered to be the organ of covetiveness, till he shall have made

* A story is told of a gentleman who went to see Cader Idris, which will give a reason for my assuming such a character as an illustration. As the gentleman and his guide were proceeding up that mountain, the former being behind, perceived on the hinder part of the guide's head the organ of murder! He took to his heels, and did not stop till he arrived at the place whence his guide and he had gone out. On enquiry, he found that the person by whose formidable skull he had been so much terrified, was both gaoler and hangman to the county!—A glorious instance of the efficacy of the system of *craniology*!

such inquiries, as to him might be supposed hardly possible, to prove that other men, whom he suspects to have been murderers, or in some way or other destroyers, were not also avaricious. And if they should not all be found to be avaricious, who appeared possessed of that organ, still it might happen to be the organ of covetiveness in a dormant state; for the doctor himself allows that thieving, which he includes in the same organ, may not be practised, even though the possession of the organ may have occasioned a considerable predominance. If a man may be a thief in organ and none in practice; if a man have no mental propensity to picking pockets, though his head would contradict him; what reason is there why a person should not pick pockets and rob orchards, without any organ? And if it should happen (and it must happen, from the doctor's own allowance) that organs exist *without their effects being perceptible*, where is the proof of their existence at all?

If a man take a fancy for killing calves or oxen, he is not to imagine, when he feels a strong organ at the back of his head, that that is the organ of destructiveness ; for there may have been some other propensity to which that organ belonged, which has long ceased to have sovereign sway over the intellect ! The organ of destructiveness may be in some other quarter ; the organ to which the particular indention at the back of the head belongs, may have become dormant, and he cannot show that the propensity for killing proceeds from that indention, till he has demonstrated that every man who adopts the trade of butcher from choice, has likewise the organ supposed to be that of destructiveness, almost, if not quite as considerably developed. Till the doctor prove that the organ of destructiveness is possessed by all butchers who are fond of their business, we shall not be convinced that the protuberance on the head of any one man who is an amateur in the trade of killing, is

the organ which first incited him to aspire to the honors of the knife and cleaver. And when he has proved that all butchers have that organ, if every head be not developed according to the number of cows or other animals the possessors have killed, then the organs have had little effect in forwarding the destruction, and the destruction has had very little power over the developement of the organs. So completely without proof is this part of the system, that I believe it might be possible for a man to be found, with the organ of destructiveness developed with as much force as in the head of any butcher, who would tell the doctor that he had never killed any man, any beast of magnitude, or any creature or number of creatures, to authorize his saying that his propensity for destruction had proceeded from any uncommon organization. This might be gathered from the doctor's own allowances; and if he can find two men having equal organs, without any thing

remarkable having occurred in the conduct of one of them, though the other has performed some wonderful action, we have to explain more inexplicable propositions than that two and two make five, or that two things which are equal to the same thing are not equal to one another. Dr. Spurzheim says it is impossible to reform a thief, and yet in another passage he allows the possibility of suppressing evil propensities! But if the latter were allowed, there is something singular in an organ first exciting a person to commit an evil act, and then submitting to be controlled. Is it at all reasonable or probable that a man should first be directed by an organ, and all his life after should be his own organic director? Has a man the government of his organs, or is he under their despotic dominion?—or, is the life of man a continued scene of pull man, pull organ; pull organ, pull man?—or, how are we to get clear from the eddies of this Charybdis of absurdity? There seems

to be some power above the law! There is no longer a sovereign dominion vested in the brain, and a man's head and his conduct may involve the Gallian physiognomist in a labyrinth of mysticism, from which he cannot be extricated even by the inventor.

Zopyrus told Socrates that he was by nature lascivious, and yet he had conquered his propensity, and his disciples were enraged at the slander of the physiognomist. One would have thought, from the doctor's system, that there would have been a tincture of lasciviousness in every thing that Socrates did, and yet history leaves us no authority for such a supposition. But perhaps there may be two sets of organs; one capable of reformation, and the other incorrigible. This, however, will make the organic analogy defective, and the system will become subversive of itself. If no evil propensity be capable of reformation, the arguments by which the doctrine is sup-

ported are contrary to fact.* If one man attempt to commit a rape, and afterwards reform; and another, after having endeavoured to perpetrate the same crime, continue inflexible to every idea of reformation, how can the doctor escape from the anomaly?

We have before mentioned the strange circumstance, that the head remains the same, however changed the possessor; and we now ask the doctor, supposing the head to be always similar externally, is there no difference in the brain when the organ is dormant and in a state of activity? If the brain can be modified as the possessor chooses; if a man can lay an organ asleep and instantly set another to some employment; in other words, if a man can go from one pursuit to another,

* The doctor says that attempts to reform criminals “ never do and never can succeed.” From this it might be proved, by a careful examination of every organic connexion, that it was impossible any alteration could take place in the organs, from the very commencement of life to its conclusion !

and recover the mental vigor by variety which sameness had destroyed, how can it be *proved* that two such organs are in different conditions? Is there a difference in fibre between an organ asleep and an organ awake?—or, is not there some intellectual eye which the doctor's microscopic penetration can easily discover, as it shuts and opens, when it meddles with the world, or leaves its concerns to be attended to by others less weary and less inclined to be drowsy than itself!

Now that we talk of weary organs, how is it that a man can steal for a life time, and be the more inclined to the practice than he was before he last picked a pocket or committed a burglary? If one organ can be weary and another can be refreshed by excessive exercise, there must be some essential difference in the organic constitution; or, if not that, there must be the assent or dissent of some over-ruling mental power, entirely separate

from and superior to the organs, however constituted. If there be such a power, then, it is not the organ which excites the man to any pursuit, but the man who excites the organ, and, as we said before, the doctrine is completely inverted and preposterous. This overruling power, to suit the system, must have some organ for its seat, some cerebral throne, where it sits and gives directions to the attendants on its court. But we are afraid that this power will stand isolated, invisible, and unembodied, till the doctor make a further progress, and find organs in recesses so secret that they have hitherto passed unnoticed. If the mind be set against them, all the organs together may exercise themselves in vain.—But what is the mind? In this passage it signifies the will, a thing which the doctor has by no means explained as connected with or separate from the organs. He does not inform us whether the will has an organ, or every organ has its portion of the will. One

of these must be the case, for will and its phenomena are so constantly occurring in every transaction, that if the actions are organic, the will must either be organic or non-existent.

This examination of the organs we shall conclude, after stating another instance of conduct inexplicable by the system, in addition to those already enumerated. Those people who are generally most sanguine, sometimes abandon themselves soonest to despair. Very sanguine persons must possess the organ of hope to a remarkable degree; now we will suppose a sanguine sailor, who had been all his life in expectation of finding the north-west passage, all at once to despair when he perceives that he is going down in the vessel in which he had sailed so long and so vainly. Will the organ of hope cease its operation instantly, and the organ of despair take possession of its situation or its functions? Why

does the organ of hope no longer fulfil its office? The protuberance or indention remains on the head as it always has remained, and we have no reason to believe that the brain has received any new conformation. Indeed, the action of the brain, if it act at all, as it is supposed to do, as connected with the affairs of life, is entirely hypothetical and unknown. We shall not examine with minuteness that part of the system which the doctor may call, if he chuse, its foundation on analogy, for we deprecate the method which he has every where adopted, of comparing all species and genera of animals, however separate, with the single and distinct species *homo*; not only do we find fault with the matter, but with the sophisticated manner of his comparisons, none of which are altogether satisfactory. They are labored, specious, and end in nothing; for the doctor allows that all animals, except for education, have only such actions as are necessary to their wants, and, therefore, all

belonging to one species being instinctively and intellectually alike, if the heads of that one species are dissimilar, the system cannot stand ; even the firmest foundation is too weak for such a fabric. Now, when approaching the conclusion of our investigation, we ask a question which we put in the commencement, where is the proof of the existence of the organs ? Because a man has an inequality in his skull, there is under it an organ which indicates, nay produces a faculty conducive of his happiness or misery ! Let the brain be cut horizontally, vertically, transversely, or directly, where are the organs ? Do they exist, because the fibres of the brain are strong in an adult, and scarcely perceptible in an infant ? The brain is strong in idiots, and they, too, have their protuberances. But the strengthening of the fibres is not the formation of the organs.

Finally, a word may be necessary here re-

specting the brain in general. The learned doctor has dispersed some of the most essential organs in the cerebrum, many of which it is impossible to dispense with, either as an adult or in childhood. The doctor may be somewhat surprised, when I inform him that a child actually lost, *for the preservation of his life*, a part of that superior division of the brain, about half a pound in weight! I am ready to refer him to the surgeon who took away the brain, and who will introduce him to credible witnesses of the transaction. It is true that Doctor Spurzheim seems to imply that a man has in some sort a double set of organs, one on each side of the head. The want of one side, however, must form a deficiency, or the duplicates must be useless.—The child I have mentioned, lived upwards of eight weeks after the portion of his brain was extracted; he performed every function in the same manner, and played with his school-fellows with the same spirit, as he had done be-

fore any accident happened to him, and there is every reason to believe that he would have been living to this day, if an unlucky fall had not so injured his skull as to terminate his existence. The denial of the possibility of ossification is one of the leading *proofs* of the existence of organs; but it is like Psalmannazar's proving the existence of a people, by giving a description of the country!* The doctor declares that the ossification grew out of nothing, and the brain in all cases is screwed up into a corner! This is one of the circumstances not fully proved, which the doctor has taken the advantage of to establish his system; and it is well worthy of observation, that craniology stands chiefly on gratui-

* This is perhaps more applicable to the whole doctrine than to this particular part. The doctor relates that Duverney produced an ossification of the brain before the Academy of Sciences at Paris; and then he says, with his usual effrontery, that the Academy were mistaken in their opinion, and that it was not an ossification! This proves that the doctor has more organs in his head than were possessed by the whole Academy of Sciences.

tous assumptions relative to points on which philosophers never have come to a decision.

After an examination, which, but for the tediousness to ourselves, and we fear much to the dissatisfaction of our readers, we had considerably protracted, we have come to this really lamentable conclusion, that in craniology, assertion and proof are always considered as synonymous, and in so christian a cause, the former must always take place of the latter. The system is one of those productions which flit about for a day, sporting their gaudy novelties in the sunshine of public favor. We would not trample on the insect, or endeavour to brush it from our walk, if it did not seem intent upon drawing its followers to the edge of a dangerous precipice; it is now fast vanishing from our view, and though we fondly hope that our observations will not be without their effect, perhaps by the time that these

pages meet the public eye, its flutterings will be ended in a voluntary oblivion.*

We return now to the subject of capacity, which has been for some time only secondary in consideration.

Creation.—Man, it is generally understood, was created last, and after there was something on which his mind might reflect, and by which his faculties might become gradually produced and developed; but let us imagine, for the sake of argument, that, after the bare and unornamented earth, man came

* In arriving at the conclusion of this investigation, I found myself placed in a very curious dilemma. On perusing it, some of my readers may imagine, that I might have proceeded further, and may censure me for not having done so; whilst, on the other hand, I may be considered foolish for having entered so seriously into a confutation of arguments, into a supposition of the truth of which no man could suffer a moment's reflection to beguile him. If the doctors or their defenders, however, think my present observations worthy of animadversion, I shall take the liberty of showing them that I only refrained in mercy to my readers.

into existence the first organized, sentient, and rational being in the creation.* What are his actions—what are his conceptions? Does he perform any wonderful feat that could be attributed to any innate faculty? Does he think of any thing but the bare ground, the vast plain of waters, the expansive heaven that are in his sight; or even of these, till an inexplicable phenomenon has occurred for the production of his reflections? No.—And if any number of objects should be created, and should be arranged with all the charms of novelty before him, does he not receive fresh ideas; are not new images imprinted on the tablet of his mind? If a man be abandoned on a desert island, without any person to educate him, does he acquire any ideas but those which circumstances produce? That he does

* That he did not come into existence till every thing was created, is a proof that it was necessary all things should exist before him, in order that his ideas might be produced from them.

not, has been proved ; and that he acquires every idea that it is likely circumstances would produce, has also been evinced. Nay, so plain is the operation of circumstances on the senses, that if a person be unpossessed of any one sense from the birth, he will not have any ideas which result from that sense in others. A sufficient instance of this is related by Dr. Cheselden, in the Philosophical Transactions. A young man, who had had a cataract for thirteen years, had it removed from one eye at one time, and from the other at a considerable interval. At first, this person had none of the ideas, either of size or distance, which are usually produced on the perfect senses of others, and they were only acquired by the constant recurrence of circumstances.* The complete absence of ideas

* See Philos. Transactions Abridged, vol. vii. p. 235. Original, vol. xxxv. p. 447. Goldsmith's Earth and Animated Nature, vol. i. p. 313. And for an account of this and some other cases, see the Tatler.

connected with acoustics is frequently observed in people who have been deaf from their infancy.

Let us vary the argument drawn from the commencement of human existence: let us imagine two twins born on a desert island, there abandoned, and unassisted by any human being. When they have acquired the means of using their faculties, will they both have the same ideas? There is presumptive proof that they would not. One may be conceived to be placed nearer than the other to a very bright and consequently very attractive object. Attention is produced by the constant operation of this object on the substratum, and after some considerable time has elapsed, he who is nearest to it, seizing the hand of his companion, points to it with rapture. This circumstance of one person seeing a thing before another, will create a difference in the progress of ideas, which will

become wider as the attractions become more numerous. So minute are the causes of the improvement and diversity of the capacity, and so trifling and careless are mankind in their observation, that the mist of innateness can hide from them the demonstrations of their own folly, at the same time that it conceals by the appearance of certainty its own impervious obscurity.

It has generally been said that the child, some few weeks after he is born, has a choice of the objects of his attention. This is scarcely the case when man has arrived at the greatest possible height of human knowledge and felicity; still less can it happen when the child has acquired no power of judgment and discrimination. The most brilliant colors force themselves upon the sight, and where there is the greatest number or the most happy arrangement of colors, and other objects particularly attractive to the

senses, the child is sooner enabled to reflect upon what passes around him. Nay, so much has circumstance to do with the commencement of our existence, that it is plain there is no natural attachment to parents or relations, and that children only become more delighted in the presence of their nurses or their mothers, because they have been more attentive than others to the necessities of their tender years, and have been near them more frequently and constantly. Thus, then, capacity is enlarged, accordingly as there are circumstances into which the child may be thrown, for the exercise of his senses, and for the production of the faculties of reasoning and memory. The difference in the quantity and repetition of ideas, then, causes them to be more easily retained or forgotten, and enlarges the capacity, which, like an elastic vessel, increases in dimensions with an augmentation of its contents. If the faculties and extraordinary capacity of some men were in-

nate, and only required opportunity to show themselves, many men shortly after creation had no opportunity offered them of exercising their faculties, and consequently many faculties must have perished with them, which otherwise might have been useful, but, as it happened, had been created without a purpose !*

The commencement of society.—A foolish question may be asked here, which might

* The first men who were created, it is plain, must have been men with whom no comparison or similitude would stand ; they were unique, and as little to be likened to their fellow creatures who succeeded them, as the figure 1 is to be compared with the figure 9, or a well-cut diamond with an unpolished pebble. It was not to be expected, as they had no innate faculties for arts and sciences, that they should find out the arts of life which were afterwards invented and brought to astonishing perfection ; and consequently we find them rude of speech, uncultivated in their manners, clad in skins, feeding upon roots, and drinking the limpid water from the brook. If there were an innate capacity, why did it not show itself ? If there were no opportunities for its showing itself, when did opportunities appear ? Not till circumstances had gradually produced and strengthened the intellect ;—not till innateness was useless, and might have been dispensed with !

puzzle any person who considered himself bound to answer it in an affirmative manner : Did society produce the faculties, or did the faculties produce society? This obliges us to recur to something which we have almost sufficiently discussed. (p. 101, 2, &c.) If man were created solitary, there is a fair inference that he should remain so; but the inference may be turned into an argument against the fact, and we must, perhaps, partly allow that mankind were created gregarious. If this be the case, then, society must have created the faculties; but we do not consider this to have been the fact. Let us suppose two families, or only two men and two women, to have been first created. They have children. From an easy comparison, they perceive the necessity there is of attending to their helpless condition. Almost before these are able to satisfy their own wants, other children make their appearance. They must be watched as carefully as the first. By the time, or before

the time that the last children are able to walk and partially to seek their own nourishment, the first born, whatever may be their number, will be capable of taking care of them, or of a third couple, at any rate, by the time that they are produced. At this period, an attachment will take place between the two families, and rather than separate, they will follow the direction of their desires, in preserving the society they have formed.—When some number of families are thus, we may say, naturally united, they may divide, or a smaller number may detach itself from the larger, but they will never be entirely dissipated. Such a gradual association might have happened, supposing man to have been left entirely to circumstances; or, it might have taken place, even if he had been created with every reason to believe him an animal of the solitary species. Why, if it could not, do animals of gregarious species become solitary? Why does the dog leave his race, and follow

mankind through whole ages? Why do elephants, when they might abandon their entrappers and return to the forests of their youth and their liberty, combine for the enslavement of their kind?

General Acceptation.—It may seem singular that there are arguments in my favor from the general acceptation of words, and from some usual comparisons; but it is nevertheless true. Persons who are famous for any brightness of capacity, are called learned, wise, sensible, &c. and are praised for what they have done. Others, who have what men call a dull capacity, are denominated stupid, and are blamed for their stupidity. Now, if either the capacity or the stupidity were innate, there would be no reason to praise or to blame those who possessed either one or other; both might attribute their failings and excellencies to Providence alone, and should neither exult in their fame, nor blush for their

degradation. Mankind cannot certainly be praised or blamed for what is the result of circumstances, any farther than they can for what they possess by nature; but when they have begun to think, children easily take advantage of circumstances, exertions follow, and then they perform actions that are deserving of approbation. Encouraging circumstances, as well as those of a discouraging nature, frequently occur through the whole of a man's life, so that it is impossible to prevent their effect upon the actions; but when a man has paid particular attention to trains of circumstances, by which he had been frequently affected, and has acquired experience, he may be praised, and when he neglects to pay that attention to circumstances that constitutes such experience, he is deserving of the most severe reprehension. Experience, under various modifications, is one of the principal causes of capacity; and not capacity the occasion of experience. When man, then, is, from va-

rious causes, almost the creator of his own circumstances, he may certainly with propriety be praised or censured, though innate qualifications can never be applauded or disapproved.

The human mind, in its developement, has been generally compared to marble. Untouched by the chisel, that substance continues rough and inelegant; and so does the mind remain rude and unpolished before education changes it, and gives it the surface, which, without tuition, it would never have possessed. And yet no one would say that marble, however capable of being polished, possesses the polish internally, which is afterwards contributed by the sculptor. As well may it be said that all the statues of Praxiteles, or Michael Angelo, of every great master of antiquity, or of our own times, existed in the quarry, but only required the hand of the artist to call them forth. If this be said, then I need not contend, for it might, with equal truth, be argued that man

existed long previous to his creation !* If a skilful person take a piece of marble and polish it, he may make it so surprisingly bright and so remarkably smooth, as to astonish all beholders. But if an unskilful man should take, and roughly handle, and awkwardly hammer a piece of marble, which would have been as bright and smooth, if well polished, as any piece of stone could be made, it will break, and will exhibit a number of rough and unpleasing holes and unevennesses. So with the mind. If a child have a skilful teacher, his intellect will grow into a piece of celestial workmanship ; if he be entrusted to a pedagogue, the roughness of the instrument will be marked on the rudeness of the material.— But some stones, it may be alleged, have a superior capacity for being polished, while others will not bear a polish from the finest

* This is an argument which has sometimes been gravely supported ; and where did man exist ? It has been answered, in the mind of the Creator.

workman ; freestone is not to be wrought on with such excellence as the Parian marble.*—

Freestone, I answer, may be something like an idiot from the birth. But I do not enter into a history of mineralogy, on account of an imperfection in this single metaphor. It is sufficient for my purpose that it is a figure generally employed, and that it is more nearly reconcileable to my doctrine than to any other. I leave all other stones out of my consideration. Man is one species ; marble one genus ; and the man that will condescend to ransack all species of all genera, either of mineralogy or zoology, for forced comparisons and strained

Though I do not enter here into a consideration of the qualities of other species of stone, I am convinced that freestone, after remaining in the earth, under particular circumstances, longer than it is generally permitted, would become much harder than it is commonly found. Some of the Scotch freestones, the quarries of which have been considered remarkable for their age, have been found particularly hard. May not all common stones be modifications of one another, so that freestone, after a sufficient time has elapsed, may contribute to the composition of granite or marble?

and unintelligible arguments, must soon perceive that he is groping his way farther and farther into error, and that every step he sinks deeper amongst the morasses of folly and conjecture. But all marbles are not capable of equal polish? Notwithstanding, I am not to conclude that all minds are not susceptible of equal cultivation. But I am not satisfied that all marble is not capable of equal polish by the hand of a good master, and with the same instruments. Supposing this not to be the case, and even allowing that it is not, how came the original difference betwixt one marble and another? Are they different original formations in the earth; or are they not rather the same substance thrown into different and opposite circumstances? The formation of marble may be compared to the formation of the mind by circumstances, before it becomes the immediate object of education.—The polishing may be assimilated to the cultivation of the intellect. Before marble comes

to be polished, circumstances render its polishing less difficult or more arduous. Before the mind begins to be tutored, circumstances take effect on the senses of the young and the unwary, which make them obstinate, condescending, easily taught, or impossible to be rendered docile.*

Liberty and necessity.—Our arguments may be objected to by some of those who have so long wrangled, and will wrangle *ad Græcas Kalendas* respecting the possession of a free will, or the influence of an over-ruling and omnipotent necessity. The friends of *liberty*, as they may call themselves, will argue that the Deity must have directed the circumstances to the substratum, or the substratum to the circumstances, or it would

* This is only one of the common comparisons. They are numerous; but our readers, if they examine them for themselves, will find them all so accordant with our sentiments, that there is no necessity to pursue our examination of them farther.

have been impossible that any train of ideas, however striking, could have excited attention from beings who could not employ attention when first created. That the eyes have not, independent of some over-ruling power, the means of seeing, I think must be conceded by all parties. The dependence on Providence, then, is the same on both sides. If the faculties are innate, they must have been created; if they are circumstantial, they must have been, nevertheless, created. Which way soever the point may be disputed, there is a power over the mind of man in its commencement; and why there should not be such a power in its progress, must be left for wiser heads to determine. Philosophical necessity, it is evident, must exist, or the Deity never foresees the actions of his creatures. Necessary connexion makes a foreknowledge of the actions of all sentient beings indispensable in some power, separate from the mind of man, or they could not take place. That my doc-

trine is more immediately connected with philosophical necessity than others have been, I consider an additional proof of its veracity.

We have now arrived at a part of our essay which makes a kind of natural division between capacity and genius. The latter has by some been considered as nothing but an extraordinary extension of the former; but, as a more distinct definition has been given by the more numerous, to their opinions we shall accede, by forming here a resting place for the reader. A general retrospect of our arguments, which we had at first intended to make here, we shall postpone till we reach the conclusion of genius. In taking a survey of the work from this part, we hope the reader will rather attribute any omission of objections we may have made, to our ignorance of their existence, than to any wilful neglect. All that we have as yet discovered, we have answered, we expect, to satisfaction; and, at

present, we are confident that there can be none which would not fall before an impartial investigation.

ON GENIUS.

The great question of genius, in every department and variety, is now to engage our attention. To trace the human intellect through the mazes of accident, from the period when it emerged from the chaos of ignorance, and rose like the sun approaching to its meridian, till unfortunate circumstances again plunged it beneath the horizon; whether a nation or a world has, in its revolutions round the axis of time, drawn nearer to a God-like perfection, or, sunk in a sea of forgetfulness, descended to the state of the brute whence it proceeded; whether an individual drew from his friends or his countrymen the praise which resulted from almost involuntary admiration, and encircled his head

with glories by soaring to the heights of human knowledge and human virtue, or excited the horror of those by whom he was surrounded by a depth of dark attainments, hitherto unknown and dreadfully astonishing, and clothed himself in curses by the diabolical expedients of an infernal, the subject must be studied with delight; and though the path may be luxuriantly strewed with the flowers of entertainment, the reader must arrive in the end, at the instruction he had almost forgotten to require. By being made acquainted with the progressive steps by which some have advanced so far, others will be tempted to endeavour to obtain a similar advancement; and those who have made a considerable journey, will, by being taught to retrace their progress, whilst they have hitherto considered their eminence as inevitable and instantaneous, know how to travel through wilds as yet untrodden. Nations, when they perceive how their brethren in intellect have by easy

transitions attained the glorious situation in which they stand, will be roused by a spirit of emulation to stupendous efforts, before almost inconceivable; and men, when they see how much depends upon their own exertions, will take wing, and rise into the skies they had so long gazed at without a hope of reaching. When parents know that genius is not innate, they will exert themselves with tenfold confidence in favor of their children, and children will join in a pleasing fellowship to help one another forward in that track which, though formerly trodden but by few, may now contain all mankind.

What is genius?—The definitions of genius have been too numerous for us to entertain a thought of taking a view of the opinions of ages long past, or, in modern times, of poets, philosophers, and historians, who have left upon record sentiments so discordant, that what one man defined to be genius,

another almost proved to be the want of it.— Dr. Gerard, and many more with him, have defined it to be a power of invention. Mr Fuseli, whose acquaintance with genius no man will dispute, though it may be with truth supposed that his mind is more adapted to the pencil than the pen, has defined it to be “that power which enlarges the circle of human knowledge, or combines the known with novelty.” This definition is good, except for the tautology, and in fact it is the same with Dr. Gerard’s, with a verbal variation. But even to these definitions some limits must be assigned, for, if taken generally, I question if there ever were more than two or three men of genius in the universe.— Supposing a person to write, or to complete some vast, laborious undertaking, which appears entirely new, and a work of genius to a part of the world which is the most polished, that work may have been known some considerable time before to a nation which is

now the most ignorant, and if it should rise amongst them, might be recollected to have existed. It might, on the other hand, become known to the most ignorant portion of the globe, and be considered altogether novel, when, to the most cultivated nations, it would appear old and well known, and would excite no admiration. The Chinese were not at all astonished at the European use of gunpowder in wars against them, for it is well known that they used it, long previous to the European invention of it, for blowing up walls and blasting in mines, and that it had even been adapted by them to the purposes of warfare, several hundred years before the christian æra. And yet Roger Bacon and Berthold Schwartz have in our hemisphere the credit of the invention.* It may be said, however, that this is a singular instance, and that in-

* There is a ridiculous idea, that because an invention exists in two places at once, it *must* have proceeded from one to the other. We shall examine this at greater length hereafter.

ventions in general do not proceed farther than the hemisphere in which they originated; so that it is impossible, save in such remarkable exceptions, to compare or to know the inventions which have arisen in two portions of the globe almost at once, as if to balance one another. We may still therefore define genius, with some limitation, to be a power of invention. But if it be that genius is a power of invention as far as relates to the part of the world in which the person who has exercised his mind has exerted himself, the days of genius have almost gone bye, for we see men who every day send into the world what they themselves have invented, but which has been found out and made public perhaps long previous to their existence.—However such men may have invented, the great similarity between their ideas and those of their friends, contemporaries, and predecessors, will entirely deprive them of any praise or any credit for a power of invention which

has been exercised, no matter how deeply, upon subjects which have been already pretty well explained to the world, though before they began to write or to labour, they were ignorant of the subject, and came not in the way of the explanation. In defining genius to be a power of invention, it is not generally stated under what precise circumstances the invention is exercised ; whether the manner be always voluntary, or sometimes involuntary. It is allowed that persons who dream possess the power of invention, or at least have the power of invention exercised in their minds to a very considerable degree, and yet I know not any one who would willingly give his credence or sanction to a doctrine or definition which considered all dreamers as men of genius !

Others have defined genius to be a natural talent or aptitude to one particular art or science, or a power of acquiring a proficiency in

any thing with rapidity, whilst others who possess it not, acquire whatever they attain with tardiness and difficulty.* This definition is evidently involved in innumerable contradictions; it would exclude from a claim to genius the admirable Crichton, the famous Mark Boyd, Donna Agnesi the great mathematician, and an immense number, who have been reckoned by the world in general as persons of universal genius. Those, however, may be said to be included under the second head of the definition. That they had a power of acquiring a proficiency in a great many arts and sciences without much difficulty, is undoubtedly true, as far as we can credit the accounts of their lives, which are submitted to every man's perusal; but might it not happen that many would attain a proficiency in any pursuit, much sooner than some of those wonderful characters, and yet have no claim

* Du Bos, &c.

to genius, or extraordinary powers? Besides, many persons have had the greatest imaginable difficulty in attaining even tolerable perfection in any art or science in which they are determined to excel; though after considerable exertion they have made a progress so astonishing, as to be classed amongst men of “extraordinary natural faculties.”* The struggles which Demosthenes had with his defects and bad habits, produced perhaps by mimicry, joined to a negligence of his education in those to whom he was entrusted, and a consequent carelessness of instruction or improvement, abundantly proved that it was not a power of rapid acquirement that enabled him to attain a greater perfection in elocution than those whom he was afterwards to op-

* Many of my readers will here call to mind the difficulty which Boileau experienced in attaining a proficiency in the art of versifying. His, however, was a remarkable case; he never so improved as to arrive at a facility, but preserved to the very last the slowness and indecision in his compositions, which he first manifested.

pose. Some are ready to *assert* that if Demosthenes had not been strengthened in his resolution to distinguish himself by his eloquence, by the confidence of his genius, he would never have overcome the dreadful obstacles by which he was surrounded. We shall have another opportunity of investigating the character and progress of this great orator; at present we think it sufficient to declare, that we have no instance of a man struggling under similar circumstances with Demosthenes, who did not overcome them, and become in every respect that great man's counterpart. Till we have such an instance, we must be content to infer that the confidence of genius, here imagined, is nothing but that determination inspired by the success of others, which must be strong in every man in a particular situation.

The innateness of genius is, in the second and more common definition, considered as

certain, and of course taken for granted. In the first, it is not mentioned; but it is only omitted, because believed indisputable. It would be advisable to find some definition which would include all parties, and prevent disputes *in limine*, thereby confining discussion to the more important parts of the subject.—We may, I think, without incurring much contradiction, define genius generally to be a power of invention; or, to avoid dispute, we might denominate it a voluntary power of presenting uncommon pictures to the mind, though the invention, or the singularity of the pictures presented, be subject to circumstantial limitations.

Dr. Gerard's definition controverted.—*

An author with whose character no man can be acquainted, without feeling the greatest

* As there is in fact no difference between my definition and that given by Dr. Gerard, my readers will, I hope, excuse my making common cause with him in its defence.

respect for him, and for his writings, has taken upon himself to confute Dr. Gerard's definition of genius, which, as we have already mentioned, he has considered as a power of invention.* He commences a short essay upon this subject, in a manner, by ridiculing the gravity of the doctor in his having asserted that imagination was the faculty to which the invention of which genius consists can be principally referred. He says few are ignorant of this. Now, I am so far ignorant of it, that I consider it untrue in every thing but poetry, painting, and perhaps music. Judgment is the great power by which invention is directed; it is only by comparison that inventions are made, and by closely examining

* See *Essays Philosophical, Moral, Historical, and Literary*, by W. Belsham, vol. 2.

The quotations I have made from this work are from one edition, and the references I have given are from another, but though there may in some of the former be a verbal difference, there is none that will make any real alteration, or occasion any inconvenience to the reader.

data, from which a novel combination can be formed. There are, without doubt, many kinds of invention, but if, in the principal, judgment could not do without imagination, imagination could still less dispense with judgment. If the learned author had said that judgment and imagination were the two principal powers on which invention depended, he would have been making an approach something nearer to the truth; but still Dr. Gerard is not to be ridiculed, because he made a matter of argument what another person idly deems a truism. This author, proceeding in his essay, seems to consider genius as a kind of extension of capacity. But if this be true, what am I to think of the definitions on this subject? Are there a dozen different species of genius, or how many; and is there a genius for every thing? If the last be the case, then are not genius and capacity confounded by calling the former a portion of the latter, or an extension; or if not exactly confounded,

where are we to seek for the “certain degree above the common level”* by which genius is distinguished? But if even we had discovered that level, a man may be said to have a genius without any exclusive reference to the faculty of invention, which every person who has common sense must, in most cases, consider impossible. Thus, by this unfortunate attempt at an overthrow of Dr. Gerard, instead of a certain and determinate definition, we have nothing but uncertainty and confusion.

“Imagination,” meaning, I suppose, invention, “almost invariably accompanying
“very remarkable superiority of capacity, it is
“justly considered as one of the principal ingredients which enter into the complex idea
“of genius; but judgment, memory, understanding, enthusiasm, and sensibility, are
“also included; for a very high degree of ca-

* Belsham's Essays, vol. ii. p. 453.

“ capacity is as constantly found conjoined with
“ these mental qualities, as with imagination
“ and invention.” I need say little on this
passage, but that I submit it to the examina-
tion of my readers; the author has first defin-
ed, or rather *undefined* genius to be a *certain*
degree of capacity, (by which he means an
uncertain degree,) and then concludes, that
because extraordinary capacity is made up of
the qualities he has enumerated, genius has
them all in its composition! But supposing
it had them all, what is the conclusion at
which we must of necessity arrive, and at
which this author would arrive, by pursuing
a line of argument with a direct intention of
avoiding it?—That every one of those powers
is necessary, in particular circumstances, to
form an acute power of invention.

A great deal of confusion must arise in
what this author has said, from his sometimes
using, as almost synonymous, imagination and

invention; for if one may judge from the commencement of the essay, imagination is only a great assistant to invention, or component part, and how can a component part, however great, be synonymous with the whole? The question between us seems to be—Do we ever give the name of genius to any action in which invention does not predominate? If we do not, (and that we do not, I think, is plain) then is the power of invention, genius; and certainly every power which this author mentions besides, assists in the composition of genius, not in company with invention, for genius is invention, and no man, unless he were determined to be laughed at, would say that genius was one of the parts of which itself was composed! The author then proceeds, “in vindication, “however, of that erroneous hypothesis “which reduces genius to mere invention, “Dr. Gerard observes, ‘that if a man shows “ ‘invention, no intellectual defects his per-

“ ‘ formance may betray can forfeit his claim
“ ‘ to genius, and the degree of this faculty
“ ‘ ascribed to him is always in proportion to
“ ‘ our estimate of the novelty, the difficulty,
“ ‘ or the dignity of his inventions.’ But
“ this is evidently supposing a case which is
“ never known to exist.”* What! A man
never shewed invention, and had at the same
time intellectual defects! Then there never
were two degrees of invention, however it
was modified. The author supposes that Dr.
Gerard means by intellectual defects, the to-
tal want of judgment, understanding, sen-
sibility, or taste, as if a mental defect were to
be the total privation of some material fa-
culty! After Dr. Gerard has said that mere
unguided fancy cannot be called invention,
our author, with a most inveterate obstinacy,
asserts that the doctor will not allow inven-
tion to be called invention, because it does

* Belsham's Essays, vol. ii. p. 454.

not suit his hypothesis. This, like what we have already mentioned, proceeds entirely from the erroneous and ridiculous notion that metaphysical words nearly allied to each other must be synonymous; that fancy is invention, that imagination is invention; and through the whole of the essay, fancy, invention, and imagination, dance through an inexplicable maze of confusion and scholasticism. The great mistake into which he has precipitated himself, is, his considering invention sometimes as synonymous with other faculties, sometimes as not in the least connected with others, and if he came in his own mind to any conclusion at all, it must have been that he did not understand his own positions. He seems to have given himself up to some ancient metaphysical ideas, that the faculties of imagination, judgment, taste, and others, were in the mind separate and distinct, or only united and brought together by some curious cerebral bridge or intellectual

embankment. If he will consider, (and perhaps he has considered by this time) he will find that the mind is one, whole and undivided; that the powers of it are only separated by metaphysicians for greater accuracy of reasoning; and that imagination, judgment, and taste, cannot subsist in any man entirely unconnected. No man can have any one mental faculty, without having in some degree all the others. It is true that the mental powers appear remarkably distinct, but yet they are compounded of one another, or at least so exchanged and interwoven, that it is impossible they can act without a mutual co-operation. Imagination is not invention alone, nor does it ever act unassisted. Where it is found in greatest perfection, there judgment is also; and when they are most perfectly united, the result is a power of invention which will produce the greatest possible discoveries. This author quarrels with Dr. Gerard for talking about the novelty of an in-

vention, as if there were no one invention more novel than another. It is true, if he should descend with us to the depth of scholastic metaphysics, into which we would avoid being dragged if it were in our power, he may prove that all inventions are equally new, by shewing us that only that part of a work which is uncommon is to be considered an invention. But Dr. Gerard did not proceed so shrewdly in his investigation, and those who have read his work, will perceive with pleasure that he adheres to the common modes of speech, and the common acceptance of words and ideas, as much as possible. If a man should invent an instrument which was much better fitted for taking measure for shoes than any now in use, and another person should invent an instrument which was unknown before, and the purpose of which was entirely novel, as the barometer or thermometer would be when they were first discovered, the former would, without doubt, be

considered an invention less novel than the latter. This is what Dr. Gerard meant, and surely a man of Mr Belsham's acuteness might easily have perceived his meaning, if he had not unfortunately been troubled by a passion for verbal disputation. After wandering, as we have already seen, he says, that genius is of too complex a nature to admit of definition (p. 457); thus leaving the subject more doubtful than it was before! Our readers will judge whether it is better to know in error, or not to know at all; or rather, to know in what one man calls error, and a thousand truth, than to be left in total ignorance. True genius, he says, instead of being confined to invention, is "often conspicuously displayed in the opposite and less dignified walk of imitation;" and he instances the translation of Homer, by Pope, as a proof of his assertion. This is an erroneous mode of reasoning, however; for had Homer written in English such as that of which our

author says Hobbes's translation was composed, and had Pope translated him, or imitated him, there would have been very few who would have bestowed the praise of genius on the imitation. What genius did Pope manifest in his imitation of the satires of Dr. Donne?

The author's position on this subject is so singular, that his words deserve to be quoted: "Had the Iliad of Homer been as destitute of poetical fire as the burlesque, though literal, translation of Hobbes, should we have scrupled to stile the beautiful translation of Pope a work of far superior genius to the original?" We may answer this by another question—Had Homer been written in such language, would Pope's translation ever have existed? The most probable reply would be a negation. As to genius in the translation of Pope, those who know how to appreciate the original will say that there

is none, or that its rays “are few and far between.”* They are only in general English readers who cry up translations from the classics, and they blaze abroad their merits, because, knowing no language but their own, they are to them what original works are to others. To form any argument at all, therefore, on this subject, the work imitated must be in the language of the imitator.

We have proceeded thus far in defence of Dr. Gerard; and the definition of genius we have adopted, which, though not the most convenient for our purpose, we consider the true one, inasmuch as we have not as yet discovered a better substitute, and as it embraces all possible cases which have yet been investigated.

* On a careful examination, it will be found that in an imitation no genius is shewn, except where the invention of the imitator predominates.

This definition inconsistent with innateness, which Mr. Belsham defends.—The definition which we have been considering, if definition that might be called which definition was none, will plainly be perceived to be inconsistent with innateness. Innateness supposes something superior in the commencement, but this “definition” shews that genius does not manifest itself, “till capacity
“arises to a certain degree of superiority
“above the common level;” so that it may be easily proved to be a creation of circumstances. But this definition could never be supported; for there have been instances of boys who have shewn genius at two years old, when their capacities could not even have attained to the common level. We have, then, a little of the unqualified assertion of the innatists: “No experience, no application will either
“conceal or compensate an original deficiency of genius.” (p. 460.) How are we to know that any man possesses an original de-

iciency? “Poverty of genius in reality becomes only the more conspicuous, by an artificial conjunction with extensive knowledge or profound learning.” Poverty of genius becomes only more conspicuous! If any individual whom you should chance to meet, should manifest a poverty of genius (which here, by your own allowance, must signify a poverty of invention,) and he has become learned, and has studied all his life, will you take for granted that that person had no genius originally.* You may, if you choose, suppose it; but to say that any man had an original poverty of genius, is as rational as to tell me that the goose which was roasted to a cinder had an original dryness, which was only rendered more conspicuous by the burning of the animal!

* No man, by our own argument, has either genius or poverty of it, originally. My meaning here is, can Mr Belsham prove that any man had a formation of mind originally tending to genius or poverty of it?

The train of reasoning which has produced the definition of genius as a power of invention, is worthy of our observation. Suppose a person considering the subject for the first time, what would be the train of reflection?—There is some thing or property which the world consents to call genius. What is the effect of that property? The production of things, or modifications of ideas, unknown before. What is that denominated? Invention. What then is genius? A power of invention. We cannot judge of any power, but from its effects, and invention is the only known consequence of genius. Where, then, does the faculty reside? Dr. Gall will tell us, in different compartments of the brain.—Others, less bigotted to system, will inform us that it exists in the mind. An acute, plain, unphilosophical man will not be satisfied with this, but he will ask, what is genius separate from the mind? A metaphysician fond of innatism will answer, all men have not genius,

though all are possessed of mental powers — But is genius, in fact, any thing distinct from the intellect? When a man invents, does he exercise any other power but that of thought, in order to complete his invention? If this be true, and no man invents when he first thinks, then the cause of invention must be sought for in something that happened after his first thinking.

M. Montesquieu has given us a more singular explanation of what genius is, than could well be imagined from a person of his clearness of intellect and carefulness of expression. “I call genius a secret gift of the Deity, which the possessor displays unknown to himself.”* If it be meant by this, that a person does not know that the power he is exercising may be called genius by the world, this may happen, and not unfrequently; but

* See a number of maxims published amongst the President's posthumous works.

if the President intended that a man who had a fine genius for painting, did not know that he possessed that power, even after he had made considerable progress, and had been applauded for its exercise, who is there that would listen for a moment to an assertion so ridiculous? And why a secret gift? Genius must be known to a great part of the world, or at least to some number of persons, or it does not exist. There must be a knowledge of such a power some where, or it is degraded into a mere animal instinct, which is supposed to be entirely automatic, and exercised without consciousness. M. Montesquieu imagined genius to be, in many respects, like instinct, and his opinion was not unfounded. There is considerable resemblance between the powers, but they are, nevertheless, entirely unconnected. Besides, it is a very small portion of instinct that is unconscious. Unconscious powers, if the solecism can be pardoned, are always uniform, and never vary, except when the func-

tions which perform them are different. But unconsciousness is equally inconsistent with the affection of domestic animals, the variety of genius, and every thing we know of the goodness of divine Providence. No person can be a man of genius, without being conscious of his superiority, and acting accordingly.*

Difference between genius and capacity.—

We may have been supposed to have unnecessarily separated genius from capacity, by our definition of the latter, which we considered to be compounded of reasoning and memory; for how, it will be asked, can genius be exercised without these powers; and are reasoning and memory divided into distinct species?

* I have not disgusted my readers with any of the fulsome bombast of M. Rapin and many French writers on this subject. Their canting ignorance is too well known to be commented on or transcribed. Genius, by their accounts, supplies the want of every mental power, but we are not informed of the precise difference betwixt the mental powers and some *gift of the Deity* which performs their office!

We should have premised, but it is not now too late to mention it, that genius begins, where capacity is generally supposed to conclude. If a man continue for some considerable period undirected to any pursuit, and if he show himself knowing and skilful, and in some degree superior to the rest of mankind, inasmuch as his superiority is general, he manifests extraordinary capacity; but as soon as ever his knowledge is particularized, and all his attainments centred in one object, he ought no longer to be mentioned as possessed of a superior capacity, for his genius is predominant. Capacity may exist without genius, but genius, with some few exceptions, presupposes capacity.* By the intervention of circumstances at a very early period, as far as

* The exceptions, are all cases where the mind of the person who possesses the genius, is too young to have any knowledge but that which relates to the subject on which his mind is exercised. Young Crotch of Norwich is an instance of this. We shall give his remarkable genius sufficient consideration towards the conclusion.

relates to general attainment on the one hand, and particular on the other, a man may, at the same period, have a genius and an extraordinary capacity. It is more general, however, that the latter precedes the former. It may be observed, that I do not mean, by making a separation between genius and capacity, that they are separate faculties or qualifications of the human mind. They are merely the application of the mental powers to general literature, or arts, and to particular branches; and I should not have made this distinction, had it not been already common, and had I not desired as little as possible to break through general acceptance.

Men of genius different from other men!—

It has been asserted that men of genius have little in common with their fellow-creatures; that they are in fact a naturally and innately distinct class of society. This assertion brings us to the principal question in discussion—the

innateness of genius. That men of genius have their frailties, which render them in some measure distinct, cannot be denied.— But these frailties are owing to the confiding and generous spirit produced by their pursuits; when young, they are in nothing to be distinguished from others, who, when they grow up, become stupid and common-place; whilst they, by being driven along by a different current of circumstances, are raised into eminence by their learning or exertions. And even in the highest situations they are in many respects the same as other men; their bodies are subject to the same calamities, their minds are open to the same feelings, except when steeled against them by philosophy or misfortune. Those who take upon them to contend for this difference between men of genius and others, will not only find it necessary to prove that there is an innate faculty for each particular pursuit, or an innate general genius, but that there is an in-

nate difference separate and distinct from the innateness which directed to or caused excellence in any particular profession. For though, from their mode of argument, innateness may have directed to their pursuits, their avocations cannot have caused the difference betwixt them and the rest of mankind, or it is only circumstantial. They must prove that there was a marked and essential difference, before men of genius, as such, became publicly known and admired. But I cannot find that John Ludwig, or Professor Du Val; that Robert Burns, or Dr. Johnson, showed any difference, except as far as their professions were concerned, or circumstances operated.

Men designed by nature for a profession.—Great stress is frequently laid upon an opinion that many men are designed for a particular sphere by Providence, and this is the reason, we are told, why we sometimes see

people reject the profession marked out for them by friends or relations, to follow the “bent of their genius.” It appears to me to be somewhat singular, that there should be so many persons designed for no profession, and that those gentlemen who have the good fortune to be born to considerable property, should be fitted for its enjoyment, without being troubled by the interference of awkward, natural propensities, to become joiners and cabinet makers, to sole shoes, or to sweep chimnies! Some may inform us, that those who are born to no profession, are not always the sons of gentlemen, but that such cases frequently occur in common life amongst people of low condition, and that the reason why men appear so dull and ill-informed in the common trades, and in the lower branches of the fine arts, is, that they were *born* for nothing, but instructed in that profession which seemed most convenient to their friends or to themselves. This is saying, in other

words, that one man was born for a profession in which he excelled, and that another was not born for that in which he appeared stupid ! If a man were born for a profession, one would imagine that he had no occasion to learn it; and the man that was born for nothing, might be supposed to be guilty of sacrilege, or profanation, or some dreadful crime, for contradicting the will of Providence, by doing something ! It is a very singular fact, that those who are born for nothing, generally acquire the rudiments of any profession sooner than those who excel in it, and consequently must have been *born to it* ! I remember having seen somewhere, that Sir Humphrey Davy, who had added so much to the knowledge of modern chemistry, was “intended by nature for a poet.” This is a most remarkable circumstance ; that a person who was born for one profession, should pursue and excel in another, so distinct and unconnected ! The advocates of the doctrine of

necessity will contend that a man is born for the profession that he follows. Surely there requires no argument to support so plain a truism. He was born to be thrown into such a train of circumstances as would bring him to that profession and no other, inasmuch as he was thrown into that train of circumstances. There is no necessity for any innateness to prove this, and the man that contradicts it would deny his own existence.— But how a man should be born for a profession and should follow it, and another man should follow the same profession, though born for nothing, is a question that will puzzle the most acute as well as the most unreasonable metaphysician. The excellence of one man, and the stupidity of another, are the *proofs* of this different innate conformation; but it is plain, that, besides being born to it, there is some other cause for excellence in a profession, and if it can be found in the steadiness of application, in the great exer-

tions of teachers, the choice of books, implements, or materials, then there is no occasion for two causes, and the most probable must be taken to the overthrow of that which depends entirely upon improbable conjecture, and the hesitating, cause-seeking minds of those who think themselves bound to give explanations to inexplicable phenomena. Mr. Dugald Stewart has said, that the want of attention to, and the difficulty in some persons in receiving, truths made apparent by others, was a proof of genius. It may also happen that it is a proof of stupidity. It is considered that this evinces genius, because it is imagined that such as manifest this want of attention, are occupied in the contemplation of ideas which their own innate perfections have occasioned. Even if this be not the case, the neglect of the advice, and the tuition of others, can never be an evidence of genius, though it may sometimes appear as its companion: It can never prove any thing; it may have ori-

ginated from such a multitude of causes, separate or concurrent. It is by arguing upon this want of attention that the innatists would prove, if they could, that a person who did not learn the rudiments of a profession with facility, was born to practise it, because his mind was filled by his meditations on the vast improvements which his invention would afterwards produce ! That no man was ever fitted by nature for any pursuit, must be the natural conclusion of every person capable of serious reflection. Any man is best fitted for that for which he fits himself, and if he remain idle, and waiting till he can be informed by some miracle for what profession he was designed, it will too often happen, except for some lucky circumstance, that he was *born* for nothing, merely because he had not applied himself to any thing.

We have already had occasion to suppose children abandoned in deserts, under various

circumstances. The argument of the effect of abandonment will have peculiar force in this part of our subject. If a person be left where no art or science is cultivated, he will learn no art or science, and for none will he have a genius; but if a ship should carry him to some civilized country, where he should become a famous painter or a musician, will not circumstances have made him what he is, inasmuch as he would have been nothing but for the vessel's accidental arrival? What need is there for a hidden power, and for secret propensities, when all the phenomena of the human mind can be better and easier explained without them? This seeking after something innate, which prompts a person to any pursuit, is in direct contradiction to the very first rule of philosophizing laid down by Sir Isaac Newton—that no other causes ought to be admitted but those which are true, and are sufficient for explaining the phenomena. If genius, or any other phenomenon

in mental philosophy, cannot be submitted to this, I shall have nothing more to do with it, and shall think the study unworthy any man's consideration. Many persons, it is said, have all at once burst forth, as it were, into a surprising genius for a particular art. This is the general assertion; but it is not the fact. It is true, people originally dull, frequently become more perfect in any profession to which they apply themselves, than others who have appeared more sprightly, active, and well-informed. But the difference in their first temperament was the occasion of the variety in their proficiency. The sprightly, active, bustling, all-knowing man, when he began to concentrate his knowledge, would be confounded by the opposition of a host of useless and unconnected acquirements, and when he expected them to come forward as friends to his assistance, they would meet him as enemies to his advancement; the dull man, on the contrary, if he should advance without

an army of accomplishments, moves without the inconveniences by which others are perplexed, and attains the summit of genius in his profession, whilst those, who hoped to pass him in the race, gaze after him far behind, and wondering at the failure of their exertions.

The existence of genius in almost every situation, is a great argument in favor of its innateness, and that it is not confined to any period of life, proves, it is said, the inefficacy of circumstances in its production. Genius, I allow, breaks forth at a thousand different periods, and in innumerable situations. Sometimes it emanates from its possessor, almost at the commencement of his existence; sometimes in the meridian of life, and, frequently, as years are bringing him gradually to the tomb of his fathers. Sometimes it dazzles a country from the gilded mansions of affluence, and often it dignifies with its glory the hum-

ble cottage of the peasant; it mounts super-eminent amidst the grandeur and luxury of civilization, and it rises like a god from the wigwam of the hottentot, and the miserable habitation of the slave; it beams from the heavenly face of the patriarch, or the monarch who is the father of his people, and it corruscates like the midnight meteor from the gloomy mind of the murderous assassin; it decorates the spangles of the ball-room, and animates the eloquence of the senate; it astonishes the rude inhabitants of a village, and enlightens and electrifies the universe. But genius is not the same power under every influence; that it is, is a mistake which has led the inconsiderate to defend it as innate and unattainable. Though extraordinary men gain the applause of multitudes in far different circumstances for the “genius” they possess, their powers, however named, are entirely dissimilar. If their actions are unlike, there can be no resemblance in the minds

which produced them ; and no innateness can be proved to exist, if every action is chargeable on contingency. The reason why genius rises at different periods of life, is only to be sought in a complete acquaintance with the trains of circumstances by which it is produced ; and as they act in quick, or dilatory, in lucky or unfortunate succession, the man is educated into a genius or a blockhead, a hero or a villain. Have not the trains of circumstances created the difference between the African and the European, between the native of one of the five nations in North America and the subject of Great Britain ? Circumstances produced the national difference, and circumstances occasioned individual distinction. When Henry VIII. in a passion with the see of Rome, made himself pope of England, many men became famous as reformers, who would otherwise have been treated as heretics ; many were praised who would have been detested, and in the cause of reforma-

tion, many were called men of genius, who would have been regarded as senseless visionaries, or villainous innovators, to whom the name of genius would never have been given but ironically. And what is this but circumstance? Circumstance, that rules supreme over the fortunes of every created being! Let us conceive a country discovered by accident, and colonized by the discoverers; and let us suppose the colony to grow into a nation, populous, rich in resources, and fertile in imagination. Rank and difference in circumstances, and of course in intellect, gradually increase, and what is called genius is the result. Now, if the people who colonized the country had sunk to rise no more, where would have been all their descendants, where all the genius the nation afterwards displayed? “In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.”—And yet there is no woeful lamentation, no universal mourning for the seeds of the nation destroyed; for the hope of the world an-

nihilated. There were no heads of those who perished, encircled by glories, which foretold what might have been their destiny; for the thinking mind perceives, that as circumstances guided, they might have become the founders of a mighty empire, or the daring leaders of a band of buccaniers. Wherever a genius rises, he carries along with him the peculiarities of his country, his climate, or even sometimes a tincture of the manners of his particular family or district. What is this but circumstance? Genius is in general bright only by comparison. The man who is considered a prodigy by his native village, would be regarded as a pedant or a blockhead by a populous city: the man who is the god, the polar star of his family, may be the dunce and the laughing stock of his college: the pastor who is the apostle of his own congregation, may be sneered at and despised by the people of a more enlightened diocese. The lamp which enlightens a small apartment, shows

but a dim light in a lofty hall : but the fire of genius has the happy property of expanding by situation ; and the mind that commenced by a partial illumination, often fills with its glory, even the high concave of heaven.— But what is this but the effect of circumstance?

There are singular infatuations by which the idea of innateness has been considerably assisted, if not produced. When a person places himself in a situation so conspicuous as to be gazed at by all around him, there is a kind of mist which magnifies his intellect and his actions. When, by the *greatness* of these actions, and the glitter of his conduct, he has become celebrated and admired, every line he writes, every step he takes, is blazed into something extraordinary. The most foolish saying, which was yesterday condemned or overlooked, is to-day repeated and extolled.— The people deceive themselves : they expect something wonderful, and their own folly ful-

fuls their expectations. Nay, some, whose senses were more conversant with their judgment, have suffered themselves to be the dupes of the deceived, rather than become the objects of their mockery. Though unable to see the wonder, sooner than be considered singular, they have confessed that they were astonished; like the countryman who allowed that he saw the man in the moon as well as his neighbour, to save himself from the imputation of stupidity. In time, the person whose actions have been extolled, becomes himself the deceived party; he imagines that his every action is as great as it has been represented; he believes he is worthy of more approbation than he receives; and then arises the supposition that he is so much superior to his fellow creatures, that his qualifications must have proceeded from the Deity direct; that he is a favored child of Providence, and, therefore, should enjoy a larger portion of his munificence.

As another proof of the influence of circumstances, we should observe that men are not geniuses when all around them are wrapt in darkness and chaotic ignorance. A nation must have made a certain progress before any great genius is perceptible in it. There may be certain circumstantial differences in intellect, in assemblies of the rudest savages ; but it is not till a people has attained a certain population, and till the intellect has made considerable advancement, that, from the phalanxes of mind, an intrepid few rush forward from advantageous situations, to seize the meed of their exertions. As we see that great genius shows itself after a certain degree of civilization ; we may also observe, that, as favorable circumstances increase, it increases in variety. The farther a man proceeds in this investigation, he will find less cause for the interference of innateness, till he will blush at his own folly that sanctioned the introduction of such a power, without an iota of evidence to support it.

There are some common expressions with which we frequently meet in the memoirs of men of genius : “ he soon excelled his teachers ;” “ he was so attentive to his studies, “ that he soon left his able master far behind ;” and such phrases are given us as the greatest possible proof of an innate superiority. Yet to excel a teacher seems by no means a qualification exclusively possessed by genius ; on the contrary, from the argument of Mr. Dugald Stewart, it appears that many men of genius cannot attend to the common business of being taught, from the originality of their conceptions. When we see a young mind, of a fixed attention, attracted by the novelty of a pursuit, we may fairly conclude that it will acquire all possible knowledge by its application ; and it is much less like innateness of genius to see such a young mind exhaust the information of a man who has followed his profession for many years in a beaten track, than it would be like innateness

of stupidity to behold a young man endeavouring in vain to surmount difficulties which had existence only in his imagination. And yet there is always some circumstantial cause for the latter.

We must come to the conclusion, then, that no man has genius innate, for no child has at first the power of invention; children must learn first the steps on which invention is founded, and if it can be proved to me that any one infant *invented* these steps, I have done, and genius is innate and cannot be acquired.

No two geniuses are alike, say the innatists; therefore genius is innate, for circumstances that happened to the most opposite geniuses were often similar. If there never were two geniuses alike, I reply, then, the trains of circumstances were never the same which produced the powers of genius, though

individual circumstances were similar; and wherever similar individual circumstances occur, they always create a partial resemblance between the geniuses. We may show the absurdity of this argument for innateness by extending its influence. Scarcely two men think alike; but are we to conclude from this that no two men are alike in their original conformation? This is making the omnipotent Deity an attendant on the nursery. But, supposing all men originally created with an equal mental difference, then genius or intellectual superiority is circumstantial. But if all men are originally constituted alike, then all afterwards differing, if common differences are not innate, we have no reason to argue for the innateness of extraordinary differences, which are only an extension of common ones. If the original difference be not equal, then we come to the absurd doctrine of a particular Providence, which can never be true, unless there are two distinct

natures in the one living and true God. (See Appendix.)

The innatists support their doctrine by strenuously insisting that genius is an innate propensity to one art or science, rather than to another or to none. We have already, however, defined genius to be a power of invention, and we cannot reasonably and philosophically have two various definitions of the same property. But may not there be two stages of genius, the one of its commencement, and the other of its progress? If there be a sort of first stage, which is the innate prompting to any particular art on which the genius is afterwards to be exercised, how happens it that a man sometimes chooses a profession, and afterwards changing it, shows what the world calls genius in some other far different acquirement? If there existed a prompting to the profession in which the man afterwards excelled, why was he first

prompted to a profession in which he could not succeed? If there existed no prompting to the second subject of his application, when he was misled by adhering to the first, then surely that prompting when it did come could not be innate, there having been a previous period of existence when it was not recognized. Wherever there is a power of application, or prompting to any particular art, without the power of invention, there can be no genius; but if genius be produced by considerable application, and may be nevertheless innate, that which is innate is consequent upon something which is accidental, the result of uninterrupted leisure, or of the particular care and anxiety of parents or instructors! But may not genius be innate, even as a power of invention? It is impossible to invent an idea, or to make any new combination, without having previously ideas to compare or to combine, which are produced by external objects and circumstances;

and, therefore, from this mode of reasoning, we should again find genius to be something consequent upon accidental acquirements !

Difference of sex.—The difference which is observable between the sexes, has been triumphantly held forth in favor of the innateness of genius, and of the other faculties, if genius can properly be denominated a faculty. For, it has been said, there must be some innate difference between the sexes, as every person will readily perceive ; and, if there be, why is it not reasonable to suppose that the Deity would make the genius innate, as well as the difference between the sexes and geniuses ?—The sophistry of such reasoning is easily perceptible ; it supposes innate mental difference to be the same as *innate* bodily difference.—From every consideration, I am convinced that there is no difference but from circumstances. The circumstances of parturition and various sexual situations may produce some effect

upon the intellect ; but if a woman have her mind well formed before the time when such circumstances prove effectual, her intellectual powers will receive little or no alteration.— We have had instances of women who have become famous as warriors, rulers of states, and mathematicians, and they had every faculty perfect that could demonstrate the variety, the grandeur, and extent of the human capacity. The reason why we have comparatively so few celebrated women, is, that they have had comparatively a mean and unsatisfactory education. In all countries, excepting those in which the woman is considered the superior personage of the family, much less care is taken of the female than the male. The one is confined to domestic economy ; the other is more nobly occupied, and is more connected with the business of political life. In those parts of the world, however, where the woman is the superior personage, the man is confined to the

household concerns and trivial affairs, which so generally in other countries engage the attention of the female. If there existed any innate mental difference, one would think that it was in strength; but this is not the case, for we have had women, the Donna Agnesi for instance, whom I have before mentioned; the daughter of Sir Thomas More; Angelica Kauffman; Joanna Baillie; a daughter of Dr. Hutton the mathematician, not to mention the innumerable instances of ancient history, in times when women were educated with equal attention with men, and sometimes more, who showed that they were possessed of strong powers of intellect, and famous would have been the man who could have excelled any one of them in her particular department. In what then does the mental difference consist, if it be not weakness. If women have not weaker minds than men innately, and there is an innate difference, it is plain their minds must be strong-

er than those of the other sex.* If there be a difference, however, in general, and that dif-

* Much deception may take place, from men in general considering the labours of women with great indulgence, which they think due to their bodily weakness. This, however, has been guarded against, and no man could have been deceived in his opinion of the performances of the women we have enumerated.

We might prove that women were superior in intellect to men; we content ourselves, however, with setting them down, except for circumstances, as being on an equality. The regulations by which women are in general prohibited from using their powers in civil situations are not of divine appointment; and amongst nations which profess themselves civilized, they are curious and unparalleled phenomena. That the very source and origin of all our artists and senators and heroes should be denied any power in the scenes of the glory and honour of their children; that women who have sometimes so nobly devoted themselves for the good of man; that women who have sacrificed themselves for the safety and freedom of their country, should not share, equally with men, the benefits that freedom and safety contribute, is a proof of the tyranny of *mankind*, and a tacit avowal of the doctrine of Mahomet, that no souls are possessed by that portion of creation. By granting more to the female sex, are men afraid that the arrangements of domestic polity will be overturned?—that the sexes will go to war? Nature would prevent such an improbable dissension. In body, man is the stronger sex, and therefore he ought to remain in the seat of the governor; but women should have their voices heard in the state. Their suffrages ought to be valid; for they are children of the same soil, favored creatures of the same Creator; far, very far more capable of diffusing delight to all around him; and equal in mental *gifts* to those whom they

ference do not take place till after the peculiar circumstances by which the sex is influen-

obey. Some have argued that man was created after other animals, because the most dignified; from such an argument, surely woman ought to be more honored than man.

It has been said, that women have privileges of importance sufficient to counterbalance all they do not possess. They have many privileges; but they are the remnants of an age of chivalry, which, however early, no man can call the age of nature. That was the time when ladies, with an unnatural mixture of cruelty and affection, for their favors, accepted, with smiles on the murderer, the head of his antagonist; when the hand that was yet reeking with the blood of an adversary received from the undaunted fair the reward of an unhallowed conquest; when knights fought for the pleasure of ladies, and ladies braced their limbs in armour for the discomfiture of knights. The rights of women, like the rights of a people, are not to be rested on the narrow foundation which precedent affords, still less on precedents drawn from a time when nature was in subjection to the freaks of imagination. England has had a queen for her sovereign, and yet that queen had *no subjects* of her own sex! She received taxes from her "faithful people," and yet in no manner did any woman bear a part in the election of those by whom the taxes were ordered to be exacted. We hear of numerous bodies of dissenters and catholics demanding their emancipation from civil and political disabilities; how much should we be astonished if there should be an association of women for the attainment of equal privileges with the men! This subject deserves a farther consideration; my readers will pardon what I have said on it here, but my indignation at the idea that women were a less worthy sex than men had carried me thus far almost unintentionally.

ced, then there is in fact no innate difference, for those circumstances produce it, and they are not innate; and that a difference is not always produced by those is plain, whenever a mind can be made sufficiently powerful, before they begin to operate. But if there should be an innate mental difference, surely that, in the minds of sensible persons, would be no argument for the innateness of genius; it is an argument for the innateness of capacity alone, and that it is impossible to prove, and therefore ridiculous to assert.

“*It is my nature.*”—People sometimes say when they are blamed for actions which are considered improper, “it is my nature,” and this is one of the great arguments in favor of innateness. This, combined with the “innate confidence” of genius, will prove any thing. The sun rises because we say it rises; salamanders exist; ghosts walk at midnight; the devil gallops after faeries on a particular

night in every year, and seizes the last or the fattest! These are all assertions, and all prove as much as “it is my nature.” There have been seen things which were mistaken for ghosts; there exist some kinds of lizards which are called salamanders; and strange noises have been heard in the air, singular enough to justify a belief that there was a chase for the benefit of his infernal majesty’s stomach, or for the production or renewal of a blaze; and so there exists the phrase, “it is my nature.” But did any man ever imagine that any bad habit he had contracted was from nature? Had any man a powerful antipathy to a cat, or a dog, or a particular dish, without knowing the cause of it, or at least being confident that it was not innate? People frequently give way to prejudices, and say they have antipathies naturally, which they have not; and, indeed, “it is my nature” is frequently used without any thing like innateness being signified. A custom is said to

be natural to a man, because he remembers it as long as he can remember any thing, notwithstanding he could trace to its source every predilection, antipathy, or habit which he may call natural. The word *natural* has led many people unintentionally into the absurd belief in innateness, and the words “natural genius” have been frequently used without any allusion to its being unattainable by those who did not believe it to be innate. When they said a man had a natural genius, they meant that his particular pursuit had become natural to him by constant practice. Every genius is natural, in as much as it is a plain and natural consequence of the circumstances into which its possessor has been thrown. Such a genius is not innate; but if a man were to start up without the influence of circumstances, as if inspired, and were to declare that he was skilled in an art of which he had never till the moment of his declaration known even the name, that person would be said

with some reason to have a genius, at once innate and most unnatural.

There is an argument on this subject from Condillac, which is reckoned very conclusive. “Man,” he says, “does not know what he “can do, till experience has shown what he “is capable of doing; therefore, he never “does any thing purposely, till he has done “it instinctively.”* It is certain that a man must *know* before he does any thing; but it is not always his own experience that is the guide of a person’s actions. People often make attempts, without having any experience of their own, on the subject of their exertions. A man’s reliance on his own experience is the support of this argument, but its weight can never be great, whilst there are more human beings than one in the universe; for men,

* This argument will be found stated, and followed up *logically*, by Dr. Spurzheim, in the part of his work which relates more particularly to genius!

as the world is at present, act from a sentiment of equality, a natural, not an innate, prompting, which informs them that they have as much chance of excelling as their neighbours. Men who act from their own experience, who allow circumstances to influence them, without much attention being paid to the experience of others, or whom circumstances have influenced, their own wills being out of the question, have become the most skilful persons and the greatest geniuses, not because there was any thing innate in their conformation, but because their minds were built upon foundations of their own, and not produced by reflections from the minds and conduct of others, received from the innumerable reflected examples of long past generations. If a man acted in an extraordinary and scientific manner, without any experience, we should have some reason to believe his actions innate; but when a man becomes acquainted with what he can do before he does

it, is it not plain that it is by practice and not by innateness that his powers are produced and made manifest? No knowledge that is founded on experience can be innate.

In the sentence we have quoted, it should be observed, that experience and instinct are made nearly synonymous; and that any man of genius ever performed any action of genius instinctively, is what no reasonable person can ever be brought to credit. Did Shakspeare write his plays instinctively? Did Buonaparte fight his battles instinctively? Did Mr Kean act Richard the Third instinctively? This is quibbling, and the most pitiful kind of quibbling; and any man would call it so, even if it had been written by a greater than Condillac.

It may be considered that the great effect of external circumstances in our doctrine, connects our system in some degree with

materialism, more especially as we have supposed nothing to exist originally but the substratum, upon which the faculties are founded. Though we nowhere supposed the substratum to be material, except as it may be imagined from the name, we are by no means satisfied with the powerful arguments which have been alleged to prove that matter cannot think. In fact, what is spirit? Have we any idea of it, but as of a finer sort of matter? As far as the present knowledge of mankind extends, this question is inexplicable. Matter appears to us to be nothing but a kind of compressed space, or spirit; and why it cannot think or move of itself, we know not; for, by the allowance of all the world, motion, and of course thought, must be self-existent somewhere. Dark and mysterious is the subject, and it would be presumption to go farther in its consideration, without we possessed the power of omnipotence. We therefore leave the question of the agreement of in-

nateness with materialism to be decided by others. No objection can be well-founded from such a source, and therefore we have no reason to anticipate any.

There are some observations in the commencement of Lord Kames' Essay on Men and Languages, relating to particular innateness, which it may be of importance to consider. "To complete the system," says he, "we are endowed with an innate conviction "that each kind" (of animals) "has properties peculiar to itself, and that these properties belong to every individual of the "kind." That we have nothing innate, we have already endeavoured, we hope satisfactorily, to prove, but this innateness is more absurd than any we have had yet to examine. It requires us to be convinced, before there is any thing which demands conviction! We are then told that "an European, upon the "sight of a cow in Africa, strokes it as gen-

“tle and innocent.” But might he not be mistaken in this supposition respecting the cow; and if a man had an innate conviction, how could he err in his ideas of animals? Do not we see instances, constantly, in exhibitions of wild-beasts, of children running eagerly and with pleasure towards a tiger, and standing terrified before an elephant? I have seen infants start back at sight of a butterfly, and scream at a minnow being presented to them. An innate conviction of the properties of animals would make all men natural historians; and if so, Buffon and Daubenton, Pennant and Bewicke, have all labored in vain to increase our knowledge!

Lord Kames, in his eagerness to defend innateness, gives us various instances of animals which know the creatures they devour, innately; and of others which *naturally* shun their *natural* enemies, meaning innate by natural. Now, did any animal which was weak-

er, ever make a constant food of an animal which could easily overcome it? And if circumstances had made the senses of sheep as acute as those of men, and consequently had made them as powerful, would Lord Kames have said, or would any man now say, that they would have been at this day the food of mankind?

*Are mankind of one or more species?—*It seems natural, before we assert that mankind are all the creatures of circumstance without any original difference, that we should know whether they are all of one species; for, supposing they were not, it might be argued that there were different original mental conformation in different races. But let us first consider whether such an argument ought to be of any importance. We see around us various species of animals; all have some distinguishing, general peculiarity, which naturally includes them in one genus; but, at the same

time, there appear such differences in the size of limbs, in the sharpness and length of claws, in eyes, in ears, or otherwise, as to make their original mode of living different, and therefore they are divided into distinct species. This difference in the *original* formation of the senses, or of parts immediately connected with and acting on the senses, is the only argument which can be adduced in favor of distinct species. In fact, all original conformation bears in some degree on the senses; and, therefore, tracing down to *original* conformation generally, is the only means of proving primary distinctions. It will, therefore, plainly appear, that if there were conformations originally different, the senses, and of course the intellect, must also be originally elevated in some races, and originally debased in others. By there being different species of mankind, therefore, as has by some been argued, our doctrine is most powerfully threatened.

By overthrowing error, we establish truth; and, therefore, in our consideration of this subject, we shall take the liberty of examining Lord Kames' Discourse on Men and Languages, as far as relates to the question; observing, as much as possible, to make our arguments universal, and to quote most of the passages on which we may remark; thereby sparing the general reader the trouble of references, and preserving the appearance of a connected treatise.*

“Certain it is,” says his lordship, in the commencement, (*Sketches of the History of Man*, p. 16, vol. i. octav. edit.) “that all men
“are not fitted equally for every climate.”—
No; but why are they not fitted for all cli-

* I am well aware of the examination of this discourse, by Dr Samuel Stanhope Smith, and except for two or three important quotations which I shall take the liberty of making from his work, I shall not consider those parts of the discourse on which he has commented in the same light in which he has investigated them.

mates equally? The answer is plain; because they were not born in all climates at once.— If a man could be born in Jamaica and North America at the same time, and could continue so as to be equally used to each climate, then he would, without doubt, be equally fitted for both. That one man is not fitted for all climates, or that a number of men born in one country are not fitted for every quarter of the globe, can constitute no argument against the position we advocate, for custom and education are plainly the fitting powers to which, on examination, we must refer. “The inhabitants of the frozen regions of the north, &c. are all provided with a quantity of fat, which guards them against cold,” &c.; and again, “The island St. Thomas, under the line, is extremely foggy; and the nations are fitted for that sort of weather by the rigidity of their fibres.” If his lordship had taken the trouble of enquiring amongst his medical friends, they would have told him

that this change in the bodily conformation is the result of the climate, and that people *born* under such circumstances as the people of St. Thomas, have a *natural* tendency, from the climate, to acquire the same peculiarity of shape and bulk.*

“ Several European colonies have subsisted
“ in the torrid zone of America more than

* “ Not to mention the natural effects of the relaxation of heat, or the bracing of cold, on the nourishment of the body; it is sufficient to observe, that the profuse perspiration that takes place in southern latitudes, carries off the oily with the aqueous parts, and renders the constitution thin; but a frigid climate, by obstructing the evaporation of the oils, condenses them in a coat of fat that contributes to preserve the warmth of the animal system. Experience verifies this influence of climate. The northern tribes which issued from the forests of Germany and overrun the southern provinces of the Roman empire, no longer retain their original grossness and their vast size. The constitution of Spain and of other countries in the south of Europe is thin; and the Europeans in general have become more thin by emigrating to America. Here is a double experiment within the memory of history, made on entire nations.”—*Dr S. S. Smith on the causes of complexion and figure in the human species*, p. 178-9; Philadelphia printed; Edinburgh reprinted.

“ two centuries, and yet even that length of
“ time has not familiarized them to the cli-
“ mate.” His lordship, in this passage, evi-
dently expected the effect upon a colony in
two hundred years, which it would require
several thousand years to produce,—an ex-
pectation most unreasonable, and unworthy of
the author of the *Elements of Criticism*.—
“ The natural productions of each climate
“ make the most wholesome food for the peo-
“ ple who are fitted to live in it.” (p. 18.)
Certainly; was it likely that food would dis-
agree with any people when they had been
accustomed from their birth to feed on it? A
mixture of animal and vegetable food is best
for a temperate climate, and it is accordingly
easily procured in such a climate; but what
does this establish? That such an harmoni-
ous arrangement subsists in nature as to pre-
vent the world from falling asunder or be-
coming suddenly disorganized; that man can
adapt himself and every thing around him to

circumstances ; or, that he procures and naturalizes whatever he finds necessary for his every situation ; but not, surely, that man is of different species. The man and the plant grow to the climate ; and not the climate, the man, and the plant, always for one another. The plant of the same kind is hardy in one soil and with one kind of weather, and is tender with another soil and another climate ; under a genial atmosphere it flowers, and fruit in full perfection follows ; but under another atmosphere less agreeable, because it was less accustomed to it, it is stinted in growth, and scarcely shows a vestige of its former bloom and verdure. And yet there are plants thus singularly metamorphosed, which naturalists arrange under the same genus and the same species ; and man, without evidence, is to be classed under heads which no one has yet had the hardihood to enumerate !

His lordship allows (p. 19.) that the low stature and ugly visage of the Laplander is owing to climate, and, with that concession, there can be no difficulty in declaring and believing that the same occasioned the peculiarities of the Esquimaux.* I need not examine what he says about the smooth chin of the Americans; that has already been proved to be occasioned by a peculiar method of extracting the hair. “The black color of negroes, “thick lips, flat nose, crisped woolly hair, and a rank smell, distinguish them from every other race of men.” (p. 20.) But, because they are at present distinguished, were they for ever so distinct? This is a question that no one can answer, but by conjecture; and the only reason why it appears to some that they are an originally separate race of men, is, that all the

* See *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, by James Cowles Prichard, octavo, 1813. The author shows that the Esquimaux and the Skrœllingers of Greenland were of the same race, the latter being derived from the former.

differences are not considered capable of being accounted for to satisfaction! But this is mere assertion. They have been accounted for. Is not the negro complexion the consequence of excessive heat with little shelter?—What is the negro countenance, but the uncultivated form and inexpressiveness of expanded infancy? If we hold dark hair to the fire, will it not curl into the form of that of the African, and will not the hair of the African become smoother and gradually lose its unpolished woolliness in a state of civilization?*

“ There is no such difference between Abyssinia and Negro-land as to produce these striking differences”—between the inhabitants. The differences, which are great, he had not been able to trace to the different states of society, or to the variations of climate, which, if he had not depended on some *Rasselas*-like account of the country, he would

* Dr Smith proves this of negroes in America, who seem to have come under his own observation.

have found to be considerable. If he had referred to the best authenticated descriptions of Abyssinia, he would have discovered, that, as they are in other countries, where the climate is colder or hotter, there the natives are whiter or darker; or, that all variations from this rule are occasioned by the different degrees of covering and civilization. Whilst he is making every effort to overthrow the position, that color proceeds from climate assisted by circumstances, his lordship has given us a portion of a sentence with a directly contrary tendency. “The southern Chinese are white, “ though in the neighbourhood of the torrid “ zone; and women of fashion in the island “ Otaheite, *who cover themselves from the “ sun, have the European complexion!*”— (p. 21.) “ The people of Zaara, &c. though “ exposed to the vertical rays of the sun in a “ burning sand, *yielding not in heat even to “ Guinea,* are of a tawny color.” The italic part of this sentence is false, and the reason

why the people are not so black as might have been expected, is, that they wear pantaloons and turbans or bonnets, for their protection from the heat, and, in their manners, are as distinct as possible from the negroes. His lordship asserts, that races of people have preserved their complexion long after they had emigrated to different climates, and instances the Moguls in Hindostan. The Moguls in Hindostan have tried every means to preserve their complexion, and, in spite of all their endeavours, they have undergone a partial alteration.

Much of this discourse, so celebrated amongst the advocates of a number of species, is occupied by *proving* the variety of species, from the difference in manners, customs, &c. in fact, in national genius. This is considering national genius to be innate, and not circumstantial. Now, to prove any thing, national genius ought to have been shewn in-

controvertibly innate; and then, that nations having possessed one train of manners and customs, and one species of religion from the commencement, they were of course distinct in species. It is true, upon a careful examination, that the circumstances of most nations are produced by their particular genius; but it is likewise incontestibly ascertainable, that the genius of each particular nation was produced by circumstances.

Buffon, and his adherents, set out by defending the position that men were all originally of one species; that the hair, the color, the countenance, &c. were only changed by the operation of the climate, and other assistant causes, secondary, but nevertheless important. They said, that the more we approached to sultry climates, the darker was the complexion, and the farther from them, the lighter. They traced the gradations of color, and wherever they did not entirely agree with their ori-

ginal position, the circumstances of civilization, or peculiar customs, will be found to have interfered. The advocates of different species say, that the sun did not produce the difference in color and appearance.* Now,

* Mr Prichard, in his work on the Physical History of Man, in many instances seems to deny the effect of the sun upon the human body, though he allows the effect of civilization in changing the color. His arguments are particularly intended to prove that we were originally from one stock, but that we were primarily negroes. In the first place, he shows us that a great number of nations have different gradations of color under one climate, with an intention, no doubt, of disproving the sun's effects; but during the whole course of this part of the investigation, from p. 174 to p. 194, he does not appear to have taken civilization into consideration, though afterwards he gives it its due weight. He seems first to have denied the effect of the sun, and next to have attempted to prove that civilization has the greatest force. Much of his reasoning is very conclusive; but he might have at least told us what pantaloons, hats, clothes of any description, victuals, &c., the different nations used, who were of such various complexions.

It is true that if we look back to records of former times, or examine collections of ancient portraits, we have reason to believe that all who were less civilized than ourselves, were less fair and more uncouth in their appearance. Indeed I myself remember having seen several negroes, who, after wearing clothes for some time, and becoming more accustomed to the manners of the country, have turned paler where the body was not exposed, and have by civilization acquired a nobler cast of counte-

has the sun any power on the human body?
Its effect will be manifest, on examining the

nance. The sun, however, and climate, may still be allowed their effect, for however black or otherwise our first parents were, it is plain that Noah and his descendants were considerably civilized. Mr Prichard says, in a note almost at the end of his work, "Perhaps some persons may think it scarcely consistent with the skill displayed by Noah in building the ark, to represent his posterity as savages. But this was altogether a supernatural event, and was doubtless brought about by uncommon means. And whatever improvement might have been acquired by men in the ten generations which had passed before the flood, it must speedily have been lost, from the destitute condition of the earth immediately after that event." Now, before the flood, we have Enoch building a city, we find "such as handle the harp and the organ," and the instructor "of every artificer in brass and iron." This is a slight view of their knowledge in the generations before the flood. Sufficient time was given to Noah to build the ark. No miraculous interference hastened its construction; and the instructions which were given him to build it, show evidently that an ark was nothing new, but that such a thing must have been common. Noah must have carried with him all the knowledge of his fathers, and it is plain that it could not be lost during the time when he was confined by the waters of the deluge. If the knowledge were lost from the destitute condition of the earth, it must have been lost after considerable migrations from the main family, and after some long period had elapsed. Will Mr Prichard then allow that the sun made Noah dark, and his descendants

face and breast of a common laborer, after toiling under the heat of a single English summer. And yet it is said, that in several thou-

at length black ; for that they were civilized when they entered the ark, no man can express a reasonable doubt ? If they were civilized, from his arguments they must have been white ; some cause must have made them afterwards black, and what cause but the effect of climate and society ? If the sun, from which, in a savage state, men were sheltered, and the rude manner in which they lived, made them black ; and civilization and a careful guarding of the complexion from his rays, made them white, or lighter, what need is there to attempt any argument as to the complexion of our first parents ? I have said that I had known negroes who had turned much lighter in a more temperate climate and when they were clothed. Their countenances in some cases bore a singular appearance ; the white complexion seemed peeping through the black, as if the latter were gradually wearing off. This may frequently be observed, especially in old men.

If Mr. Prichard allow that the deluge ever took place, perhaps he will have no objection to allow the cause for it assigned by Scripture,—the vices of the world. If he consider this, he must be well acquainted with the fact, that wickedness, commonly so called, is never very great, except in the decline of nations. Luxury, debauchery, and irreligion, never show themselves, till civilization has gone as far as, at the time, it can be conceived capable of going. In this case, he must allow Noah to have been white, as well as his descendants.

sand years a race of men would not be turned black, who were originally white !

Ridiculous objections to the unity of the original species, are made from the circumstance of the peculiarities of each race being propagated. But, that the offspring is paler than the parent, by the copulation of a black man with a white woman, will prove that a difference in color may be produced, which, by a constant mixture with white, will, in time, almost entirely disappear.* It is well known that almost any peculiarity may be propagated, however originally produced ; this, therefore, can be no objection to the pri-

* There have been too many instances of so complete a mixture as to prevent the possibility of a difference being recognized between the people of a nation and strangers who have gone amongst them, to make it necessary for me to dilate on this subject. The alteration in the complexion and general appearance of a colony of Portuguese at Congo, is stated and allowed by Lord Kames himself. Victory is made ten times more glorious, when the enemy puts the weapon by which he is to be overcome into the hands of his antagonist.

mary unity of species. Have any objections to Buffon's arguments destroyed the rule?—Have there been established any but trifling exceptions, not only not inexplicable, but, when explained, confirmatory of the hypothesis? Is there any fact relating to color which has been alleged as a proof of different species, that cannot be explained by a careful examination into the minute differences in society, or in situation? The negroes have been mentioned. What is found in them so extraordinary? Are they not men? Have they not minds? Have they not shewn themselves equal in action with Europeans, when they had equal opportunities? If it be argued that the sun did not make them what they were, how will it be proved that it did not? Can any man shew a race of men existing in similar circumstances for an equal period, who were not equally black? The Egyptians were negroes; civilization changed the complexion of their descendants; and if time can mingle

them with others, till at length they are undistinguishable, who will say where the line of species is to be fixed? Had we lived a few centuries later, we might have been fortunate enough to have seen the gradual alteration taking place in the natives of the new kingdom established in St. Domingo;* but I hope

* The following extract is from an Hayti paper, and as it contains an appeal to humanity on the subject of the unity of species, it is hoped it will not be irrelevant.

“ Qué de sentimens de reconnaissance que tout homme de la race noire doit avoir pour ces venerables et illustres philanthropes de l'institution Africaine ; jamais société ne s'est vouée a la defense d'une cause plus sainte et plus juste ; jamais de vrais chretiens n'ont defendu avec plus de charité, de bienfaisance, de zèle et d'ardeur la cause de l'humanité, celle de l'homme comme l'ont fait nos illustres protecteurs ; que de crimes et de forfaits vont être bannis sur la terre, par l'intervention, les veilles et les travaux de ces hommes genereux ; l'Afrique desolée, ne verra plus enlever de ses rivages, ses infortunes enfans ; ils ne seront plus arrachés des bras de leur famille par toutes sortes d'artifices et de crimes, pour être plongés dans un perpetuel esclavage sur un sol etranger ! les *Brokes* ces monstrueux navires negriers n'existeront plus ! nous ne verron plus ces receptacles de crimes, dont l'aspect fait horreur et parle a nos cœur, plus que pourrait le faire le livre de plus eloquent ! nos frères, ne seront plus entassés dans ces cachots ambulans, charges de chaînes ; abreuves dans la douleur. . . . Je m'arrête. . . . J'ai besoin de respirer. . . . une foule de sentimens d'indignation, de pitié, et de reconnais-

that there will be some person as ardent in the cause of truth as myself, and far more able, who will hereafter state their change in appearance as a convincing proof that man only requires similar circumstances to be like his fellow man, however singular his formation.

sance sout couler mes larmes ! Hommes bienfaisans ! Hommes vertueux ! Continuez la tâche que sous avez si glorieusement enterprise, vous portez dans vos cœurs la recompense de vos bonnes actions.

“ Une nouvelle ère s’élève pour l’Afrique, sous l’égide protectrice des philanthropes, ses habitans pourront respirer dans la sein de leur patrie l’air pur de liberté ; ils pourront jouir des douceurs et des avantages de la civilisation en se livrant a la culture des terres, au commerce, aux sciences et aux arts ; nous esperons qu’ils feront revivre par leur travaux le souvenir de nos illustres ancêtres.

“ Dans la marche irresistible des evenemens de ce monde, tout retrace l’instabilité de choses humaines, des empires s’élèvent, d’autres s’écroulent, les lumières suivent l’impulsion des revolutions et parcourent successivement la surface du globe ; la Grèce, les Gaules, la Germanie, n’ont pas toujours été les foyers des lumières ; nos detracteurs feignent d’oublier ce qu’étaient les Egyptiens et les Ethiopiens, nos ancêtres ; la Tharaca de l’écriture, ce puissant monarque qui faisant trembler les Assyriens, vint de l’intérieur de l’Afrique jusqu’aux colonnes d’Hercule ; les restes qui attestent leur travaux existent, le temoignage d’Herodote, de Strabon et d’autres historiens de l’antiquité

We shall proceed to observe for a short time longer, on Lord Kames. “As far back
 “as history goes, or tradition kept alive by his-
 “tory, the earth was inhabited by savages divi-
 “ded into small tribes, each tribe having a lan-
 “guage peculiar to itself. Is it not natural to
 “suppose that these original tribes were dif-
 “ferent races of men placed in proper cli-

confirment ces fait ; des preuves bien plus recentes deposent en notre faveur, et nos ennemis par une insigne mauvais foi, feignent de douter, pour conserver l'odieux privilege de torturer et de persecuter à leur gré une partie du genre humain.

“Ces faux chretiens, ennemis de dieu et de l'humanité disent que nous sommes inferieur aux blancs ; plusieurs d'entr'eux ont eu l'impieté denier l'identité de l'espece humain, et ils ont eu l'absurdité d'affirmer que nous sommes au niveau de la brute, privé des facultés morales et intellectuelles.

“Nos amis, les vrais chretiens, soutiennent que nous sommes pourvus de l'intellect, que nos capacités sont bonnes, et qu'elles seraient egales a celles des Européens, si nous avions les memes avantages ; ils nous considèrent comme leur frères ; *car dieu a fait naitre d'un seul sang tout le genre humain pour habiter sur toute l'entendue de la terre.*” The article concludes with a most affecting appeal to the whole race of Africans to prove how fallacious are the assertions of their enemies.

Gazette Royale d' Hayti, Jan. 25th, 1816.

For a translation of the article of which the above forms a part, see “Hayti Papers,” lately published by authority.

“ mates, and left to form their own language?” We cannot exactly tell what tradition kept alive by history is intended to signify, but in the meaning which is commonly given to that word, it cannot be contradicted that in almost every nation in the globe there is a tradition that we proceeded from not only one race of people, but one couple : I care not where this tradition is sought ; it is the same at Pekin, at Grand Cairo, and at Delhi ;—equally prevalent in modern Hindostan, and in ancient Rome.

Are not the differences in men too trivial to constitute species? Do we not see white hares and white mice, white dogs and black cats, all classed under the same species with animals of a thousand various colors? Color is one of the least peculiarities of species, and ought never to be a means of distinction. Is the horse less a horse, whether he is grey or brown? Is the cow less a cow, whether she

is white or pyc-balled? I know the answer that may be given to this argument—most of these animals are domestic, and the breeds have been crossed to produce the color. But is this an answer? All I ask is, does color generally change the species?—and every rational naturalist will answer me in the negative. Has any race of men only four toes upon each foot, or only three fingers and a thumb upon each hand? If so, we may believe them to be a distinct species. If the one-eyed men, the Arimapsi, and a thousand others, which the elder Pliny mentions, existed; if the “men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders,” had their being in any other place than the imagination, they would have made a different species; if a race could be proved to exist, who, in their own defence, vomitted fire, or emitted a most pestilential smoke and effluvia from their nostrils, then we might declare in favor of a distinct species; but none of these exist, and we

may be grateful that they do not; and till such as these do show themselves, from amongst the fiery inhabitants of the dog star, or the genii who live comfortably in the centre of the earth, we shall be satisfied to consider all mankind as one great family.

Before we leave this part of our subject, we shall state a few questions which will concentrate it, and enable any person more readily to consider the arguments by which both sides support their positions.

1. How many were the original species; can they be distinguished; how many exist at present; how many have become extinct?

2. Has not the sun a power of changing the complexion, which, after an exposure of some thousand years, would turn it from white to black? And do not circumstances, such as food, clothing, high, or low situation,

hardships, or particular customs, as unctions, &c., or diseases, materially assist in accelerating or retarding such transformation?

3. May not the difference in color be owing, in a great measure, to the difference in the time of the separation of nations from the main body, to which they originally belonged?

4. Are not all objections to the unity of species drawn from the distance of migrations, the scarcity of provisions during those migrations, and, indeed, the impossibility of such migrations ever taking place, rendered nugatory by the impossibility to prove that the main body or original nation was stationary, where its station was, and that the earth is now as it was several thousand years ago?*

* This may be taken by those who are advocates for a difference in species, as an argument in their favor. They may say, because you cannot prove where the original species first existed, we will assert that there is no one original species. This is answered, however, by the impossibility of proving

5. If there were twenty thousand species of men upon the earth, allowed to be species by all naturalists, would it be at all an argument that they did not proceed from one original stock, as long as there remained any thing like evidence that man had been created in the simplest possible manner, which is always the method pursued by nature?

6. Are there any traditions, oral, historical, or mythological, which favor the assertion that there were originally more than one species of mankind?

7. Is any man, or race of men, adapted for any thing but by custom and circumstance; and how could they be otherwise; for, if a race were fitted by nature for a particular

where any number of the primary species existed, if there were more than one; and surely where there were more original stocks than one, it would be very easy to show the place of the first settlement of one or two at least.

climate, would not the descendants of that race, preserving the peculiar fitness of their ancestors, perish on a change of climate, which circumstances would render inevitable?*

8. If there are different original species, how are they to be distinguished from those races of men who have colonized a country differing in climate from their own, and who, of course, became completely distinct from the nation whence they proceeded?

9. Is it not common to say, “the human species,” “the human race,” &c. and is

* The “fitted by nature,” means that each species was fitted at its creation for a particular climate. A man born in any climate in which his ancestors have lived some time, is not fitted by nature to the country, but fitted because of his ancestors’ residence in it; therefore, in case of a change of climate in a country, though the inhabitants become *accustomed* to the alteration, if it approaches gradually, they could not be fitted by nature, except by a new creation.

not this a sort of traditional proof in favor of the original unity of the species ?*

I think that almost all that can be said upon this subject is reducible to one or other of these queries. The reader that wishes to be satisfied upon the question, had better alter them into heads, of chapters, or pages, and after adding such heads as I may have omitted, he may set down under each all the facts he can collect belonging to it; thus he will come to some conclusion, and I am persuaded

* It may seem singular that after I have ridiculed the mode of urging common sayings, such as "it is my nature," as argument, I should support one in my own favor. There is a difference, however, in those common expressions: some are supported by evidence which is deceitful, and on examination untrue; and others, if supported by evidence at all, cannot be disputed. Such expressions as "it is my nature," could never in one age be more correct than in another; this of the "human race," however, may have been handed down from language to language, from some period before the original species separated.

it can be to no other than that which I have been supporting.*

National genius.—Does language prove any thing like innate differences?—If genius were innate, it might have been expected when language was first used amongst nations, that some nations would have a language in despite of circumstances, as different as possible from every other. On the contrary, we find circumstances as predominant in the formation of language, as in every other particular relative to human society.—Language could not have been the invention

* I leave to others more versed in the medical science than myself to decide by what vascular organization the change of color from white to black, or from black to white, is occasioned. It has been long a matter of dispute, whether it was produced by an effect upon the bile. There are disorders which accompany an alteration of the bile by the sun, however, which are not always possessed by negroes. The difference in color is caused upon the *rete mucosum*, but whether it is by a simple transformation, or by an elaborate process, that the sun, situation, &c. effect the alteration upon it, has never been completely ascertained.

of one superior mind; it must have become gradually general in the natural advancement of society; and as its adoption must have been necessary to any set of men, or any nation, placed in similar circumstances with the first, so it could not with propriety be said that those who did first adopt it, showed any innate superiority of intellect. As languages, according to our former arguments, must have in the beginning proceeded from one stock, we might have concluded this part of our subject by asserting the necessary consequence that all differences in language must be circumstantial. But supposing this not to have been the case, and that the question remained as yet undecided, let us see if there is any evidence for such circumstantial differences having been occasioned. I believe there will be found no known language in which there are not some words exactly similar to some one other language, and circumstances not generally creating minute verbal

similarities, these resemblances in words can only be accounted for by the languages to which they belong having been derived from one common root.* Of languages as spoken, the circumstantial differences may be considered two-fold; in idiom, and in genius.—Thus, in idiom, all the European languages bear a considerable resemblance to one another, but they materially differ from the eastern languages, amongst which is supposed to be the root or original tongue. In genius, the difference even amongst the languages of Europe is easily perceptible. Thus, the French is the language of conversation, and fashionable politeness; the English appears to be best adapted to scientific purposes, and for the expression of majesty or sublimity in poe-

* Such minute similarities are even observable between the Welch and the Greek. $\Delta\eta$, *truly* in Greek, is in Welch, *De*; *Iva*, *that* in Greek, is in Welch, *Yna*; *Oiw*, *to think*, in Greek, is in Welch, *Oio*. The Sanscrit has been found to resemble the Greek most materially. By a reference to the Classical Journal, a vocabulary of similar words of several pages will be found.

try; and the Italian, for pathetic poetry, or harmony. The minor difference amongst European languages in idiom, is, that some are transpositive, and some are what grammarians call analogous; the living languages are chiefly of the latter, however, and the former is scarcely used, except in versifying.—This difference appears to have been entirely accidental, though history gives us little account of the way in which it originated. The transpositive, which appears in most instances to be transpositive only in its being so different from our own, is, in my opinion, the most natural idiom,* and the original variation may have been made by the secession of a party from the main body, which, in the pride of independence, would be eager to discover some means of establishing a distinction. The difference in genius need scarcely be traced,

* Though we may guess at the original language, the idiom and the dialect which were first *used* or *spoken*, can only be known by conjecture.

its causes are so evident. Wherever nations are established amongst rocks and wild scenery, the language becomes strong and poetical; by war, it is made commanding and energetic; by a mercantile life, it becomes mixed, and capable of a number of successful applications. When a country has a despotic government, the language will in general become, after some time, cramped, inasmuch as the means of using it are in a great measure prohibited; in a republic, however, as writing and speaking are allowed to their full extent, improvements, as well as eccentric licenses, will necessarily ensue.*

* The Chinese language has been considered a singular exception from all others, and has by many been deemed incapable of comparison. Expert philologists, however, have found that the original Chinese, not the court language, which is at present prevalent, was apparently derived from the Hebrew. The hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, and some of the Chinese characters taken from animals, bear a close resemblance to each other, but it is probably only occasioned by a similarity of circumstances.

Languages, as written, have singular and at first sight unaccountable differences.— These may be explained, however, by supposing that mankind were dispersed before any method had been required, and of course employed, for transmitting intelligence, or for communicating thoughts; or that they had established a mode of communication by means of the rude figures of the animals of the land which they inhabited, and consequently the emigrants, wherever they settled, pursuing the most simple method, made a far different written language in the country, the animals and appearances of which were novel and peculiar. It is not very probable that when all the people in the world were assembled in one place, they would be very numerous, and therefore it can scarcely be supposed that they would need any writing or hieroglyphic. If nations did not use any mode of writing till they separated, they would require some means of communication after-

wards with the main body, or that portion which remained in the station which it had occupied. This would be confined, perhaps, to verbal messages; but if the distance was considerable, the intelligence might probably be transmitted by instruments, or small animals, such as were employed by the barbarous Scythians, and such as were well known by those to whom they were transmitted. By degrees, hieroglyphics, or rather emblematic writing, for it would be known to whole nations, and not confined to priests or privileged classes, would give place to characters which were signs of words not immediately drawn from external objects, and, however slight the difference at first, a constant separation of ideas and interests make differences in every thing; and the writing of one nation would be more arbitrary when it was necessary to be expeditious, whilst that of another would be more nearly approaching the original standard, because less employed and less

open to comparisons and innovations from other bodies of people.*

We forbear to make any attempt at tracing the origin of characters. Many of those of particular nations are easily explicable, but the necessity in such an investigation of knowing the first characters used, and the impossibility of exactly acquiring such knowledge, render the subject extremely hypothetical. That writing was a necessary art, no man can deny; and consequently no man can reasonably assert the divinity of the invention. Man was so placed as to become an imitative animal, and he imitated nature, that he might communicate the ideas she produced.†

* In the present state of things, it is impossible to consider the course of circumstances in the formation of writing. It is most probable that, however formed, they were drawn from the simplest sources. This is manifest by our common hand writing, which schoolmasters tell their scholars is all derived from the letters d and j.

† Amongst all nations a sort of painting was the first mode of expressing ideas. That of the Mexicans is a polished ex-

The difference of national character.—The causes of this difference, which have been alleged by some as innate, are easily perceptible on an examination of the conduct of islanders. All the island nations which have been mentioned as opposing the landing of voyagers, were adjacent to continents near other islands, had been visited and ill-treated by Europeans, or had some other good cause for being warlike; and warlike nations, which are watchful for their own security, are hostile to strangers, whose motives for visiting them are unknown. All islanders, however, who are confident that no power, whatever be its intention, can readily destroy their security, are friendly to strangers. Many islands, when adjoining, are continually at war with each

ample of what we may imagine was formerly prevalent in a rude state. There appears to be a more natural connexion by association between colors and sounds than has generally been observed, and the Peruvians, in many instances, have attended to it. Thus, black seems symbolical of o, and all deep tones; blue of lighter sounds; and e or η, of white, &c.

other; and others, though nearly in similar relative situations, are friendly both to one another and to foreigners. This is easily explained. One or two nations have perhaps been quietly settled for some considerable time in a series of islands, which they occupied by turns, as convenience or inclination prompted. A set of islanders from some other quarter, however, having a desire to change, might migrate to some of the series not at the moment inhabited. Those who considered themselves their rightful possessors, would return, as they frequently do, at stated periods, or to perform particular ceremonies, and eternal contests are the consequence of the establishment of the new inhabitants in their usurpation. Those islands, on the contrary, where a constant friendship is observable, have been entered by one family, or, by treaty, by some different races. Those islanders who have had no arms or hostility when visited, it is evident had never had occasion for them.

When the conduct of any nation is variable, what argument can *prove* its innateness?—That the actions of all nations are variable, I believe no doubt can exist in the minds of all sensible men; the conduct of civilized nations in particular is plainly traceable to circumstance, and surely no proof of innateness of conduct can exist amongst those races of savages who have been found so different at different periods, that voyagers have considered them quite distinct from those visited by their predecessors, though they had strictly followed their lines of discovery.

Peculiar qualifications of nations.—Some nations are said to be innately inclined to war; some to music; and some to painting. Why had a nation a genius for war? Because it was fitted for it! Certainly, but by what?—By nature originally! The proper and rational answer to such a question is, by nature, inasmuch as the circumstances into which it

fell were natural to nations. And whence comes national music, and whence proceed national modes of painting? The former most commonly proceeds from the situation of the country in which it arises. Whatever sounds most advantageously in the mountainous regions, is always found there to have the predominance; and there is every reason to believe that many musical instruments were invented to suit the district in which they were found to be most admired. Thus, a Scotch bagpipe, which, however it may bring pleasing recollections to the native, is generally considered on the plains as far from melodious, amongst its pristine strong holds is known to be the most harmonious instrument. Association may, in a great measure, produce the idea of its harmony, but certainly the situation materially assists in mellowing the sound. National music sometimes has been much modified by one or two great masters, whom circumstances led together, but wher-

ever these have been absent, the music of the country has been adapted to its situation, the situation, in fact, forming the music. The Flemish and Italian schools of painting have very generally borne in their works a kind of similarity to the climate, but, though that might have some considerable influence upon their labors, such schools have most commonly been formed from meetings of painters, who assembled together for their general and individual interest. The different societies of painters gradually acquired a manner of their own, which is naturally to be supposed from the aggregate peculiarities of each man gradually introducing themselves into their paintings. As we said of music, this national painting has frequently proceeded from one person who had a number of disciples or contemporary imitators, who by degrees communicated his manner to the whole country. In the same manner, Dr. Johnson and his contemporaries produced, or completed, a re-

volution in our language, as may be seen by a comparison of the writings before his time, and after he ceased to write. Yet no man of sense would say that there was an innateness in the performances of the particular companies of men, in their general conformation, or in their individual intellects.

Governments.—Many who have well considered the question, Under what government does literature most flourish? have supported the doctrine of innateness, and yet those very persons have given so many instances of the effect of circumstances and situation, and have so ably argued upon them, that one might imagine they had been writing against that doctrine. Indeed, if they had descended in their arguments to individuals, of which they did not appear to know that nations were composed, they would have seen that they might retract their positions, or oppose the darling doctrine taught them by their grand-

mothers, that some men have innate extraordinary powers. As confined circumstances operate upon one man or one family, so general circumstances, as government, operate upon a whole nation. In one country we see literature weighed down by every species of inquisitorial oppression ; in another, enjoying all the self-supporting dignity, all the grandeur of diction, and force and elegance of imagination, which a republic only can confer. Taking all circumstances into consideration, is there not more genius in a republic than in a monarchy ? Where there is more personal equality, will there not be more attempts at literary or mental equality ; and when so many join in the glorious race, is it likely that those who wish to excel, will occupy themselves on common subjects ? In a monarchy, literature and arts subsist more by toleration, than by any wish to promote happiness through their influence ; they are revolutionized and degraded at the nod of a sovereign,

and are patronized according to the degree in which they minister to his pleasures. In a republic, on the contrary, they rule unlimited ; patronage is less a mode of gaining popularity, than a means of raising merit into notice, and when it is the former, it is only from the general appreciation which is instantly made of deserving individuals.* If, then, literature,

* The following observations, exactly applicable to this subject, will agree with the sentiments of all parties :

“It is certain that if you restrain genius you presently depress a whole nation. What was England before the reign of Elizabeth, when power was exerted to enforce the pronounciation of the letter epsilon? England was then the last of all civilized nations with respect to useful and agreeable arts ; without any good book, without manufactures, neglectful even of agriculture, and extremely weak in her marine ; but as soon as they indulged the liberty of genius, England produced Spencers, Shakspeares, Bacons, and at last, Lockes and Newtons.

“It is evident that all the arts are allied, that each serves to illustrate some other, and that one general brightness results from the whole. It is owing to these mutual aids that the genius of invention has communicated itself from one point to another ; it is to these, in short, that we are indebted for the assistance which the philosopher has afforded the politician, in opening new prospects for the improvement of manufactures, the finances, and the building of shipping. It is owing to this, that the English have arrived at the greatest perfection in agricul-

arts, &c. and every thing that can exercise genius, flourish best in a state of equality ; if the human mind be more cultivated in such a

ture of any nation whatever, and have enriched themselves as much by that means as by their marine. The same enterprising and persevering genius which enables them to work cloths stronger than ours, makes them write more profound treatises of philosophy. The motto of Walpole, the famous minister of state, "*fari quæ sentiat,*" is the motto of the English philosophers. They proceed farther, and tread with greater firmness than we do in the same track ; they dig the soil an hundred feet deep, which we do but graze. We are surprised at the boldness of French composition, which would appear to be written with timidity, if contrasted with twenty English authors on the same subject. Why has Italy, the mother of arts, from whom we learnt to read, languished for nearly two centuries in a deplorable decline ? The reason is, that Italian philosophers have not been permitted to look at truth through their telescopes ; to insist, for instance, that the sun is the centre of our planetary system, and that corn does not rot in the earth to germinate there. The Italians have degenerated from the time of Muratori and his illustrious contemporaries. These ingenious people are afraid to think ; the French have thought but half way ; and the English, who have soared to heaven because their wings were not clipped, are become the preceptors of the world. We are indebted to them for every thing, from the primitive laws of gravitation, the account of infinity, and the precise knowledge of light, so vainly opposed, down to the newly-invented plough and the practice of inoculation, which are still subjects of controversy."

Voltaire on the Liberty of Genius in a Nation.

state, is it not a very natural inference, whether qualifications be innate or not, that equality is the natural mental condition of all mankind ! *

There has been much said upon the progress of literature and arts from one country to another in a westerly direction, and on a first consideration, it is somewhat singular that they should proceed in such 'a constant course. Mrs. Barbauld, in her beautiful poem of "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven," has imagined that "there walks a spirit o'er "the peopled earth," as if there were, in reality, some genius that flew from one country to another, and lighted up a flame, for which the natives only collected the materials.— Beautiful as the idea is in poetry, it is evident,

* It is often argued, that the fear of destruction at the time of death is a natural proof of the immortality of the soul. Following this mode of reasoning, I see no objection to our arguing that the love of equality, which all minds appear to possess, is a proof of the equality of the intellect.

upon a close examination, that there is nothing supernatural or extraordinary in the progress. As things are, the motion of civilization must be constant, and it appears much more natural that it should move in one direction, than that it should move to one nation, and afterwards return to that it had lately abandoned. If it moved in one direction from the main body, which our arguments make necessary, it would have to move forward in the same direction, rather than back to the main body, where it would in fact be needless; for, in the first instance, we suppose the same civilization existed in the second or third migrating nation, which the principal had acquired. Suppose, then, that the second or third migrating nation should transmit what it had acquired, to the first or second, which would be at about the same distance from it as it was from the parent nation, the first colony, or one which the first had sent forward, would receive in time

what its parent had received ; and as colonization gradually proceeded, civilization would find its way without any miraculous interposition. Great exceptions, from literature and arts following in the train of colonization, may be made when we advance farther into the world ; but that this was the case with what little there was, originally, I think no doubt need be entertained. Why, then, need we express wonder, or create some supernatural agency on the subject of this progress ? If we saw a nation of North American Indians studying mathematics in their native woods and pristine nakedness, we should have reason to be astonished. But as science proceeds from one nation, which is perishing through excess of refinement, to another, which is just entering the pale of civilization, we have only a progress, necessary, from causes that are inevitable. That science goes to a nation fitted for it by circumstances, is evident, or it would not go at all.

Genius for particular arts or sciences.—

Painting.—We now proceed to consider particular genius more minutely, and as this kind of genius more peculiarly belongs to the polite arts, we shall commence with painting. We will suppose that a particular person invented painting with oil. Had he a genius for it? Was he not at first as weak a child as any of his brethren of imbecility? If a man possess a genius for painting, why does he go to Rome? To improve his genius? Then Rome must receive the praise of his after excellence, and not his innate powers.—When a man shows invention in painting, it is called genius; and it is a singular fact, that if a painter imitate a great master, in expression and disposition, and not in mode of coloring, he will produce a manner of his own. If a man paint rabbits and other animals in a curious and unexampled, though natural manner, he is, of course, according to the innatists, an innate and original ge-

nus ! Perhaps an interposing tree, the setting sun reflecting upon a chalky rock, or some other circumstance, threw a peculiar light on the first animals he saw or painted. He copied this light, and the consequence was, his peculiar mode of painting, for the same light might never have been observed before. An artist, whose painting was produced in this manner, could owe nothing to innate power, or to invention, for he only *imitated* with common colors a lucky and singular disposition.

Was not painting the origin of written language ? This has been so often proved, that there is no need to dwell on it ; and as painting was first employed by the necessity of circumstances, it could not be innate ; it could only be natural.

Poetry.—As painting was the original of written, so was poetry of spoken lan-

guage.* We have a very old saying, however, which defends innateness on this subject, and as proverbs generally take the place of arguments in such a cause, it has been upheld as sacred ever since it was uttered,—“*Poeta nascitur, orator fit.*” It might as well have been said, *poeta et pictor nascuntur*; for though the real mechanical art of painting canvas may be taught any where, as well as that of making rhymes, neither the spirit of painting nor poetry can be taught, as is common in the schools, by way of task or repetition. Did any man ever hear of a child being *brought up* to poetry? No; but still it may be taught, as it is taught every day, by circumstance and situation. Let any

* Dr. Johnson has said on some verses of Denham, (see *Lives of the Poets*,) “—and if there be any language which does not express intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be translated!” This is impossible. The sentence is one of those which men, like Dr. Johnson, who pay rather more attention to their words than their ideas, are disposed to consider philosophical.

child be taken from the nurse, and conveyed to a wild and beautiful country; let his young mind be tutored by degrees to an imitation of the beauties which surround him; as he is required to be poet or painter, let his mind be directed to the pen or the pencil, to the book or the landscape, and he will become, by skilful management, a noble, energetic, god-like artist. The words "*Poeta nascitur*," have been entirely misunderstood; they mean, not that there is any thing in the mind which would direct, in spite of every thing, to poetry, but, that it requires a peculiar situation for the *inspiration* of his mind; and, on the contrary, that in any situation an orator may be produced, though particular situations will make a man a metaphorical orator, like Cicero, or an energetic, action-moving orator, like Demosthenes.

Is the genius for poetry any thing else than a bias given to the whole mental power? If

it be any thing distinct from the application of the complete mind, those who assert the distinction, are advocates of craniology,—an imputation to which, I am persuaded, they would rather not be liable. If, however, the whole mental power possess a bias to a particular pursuit innately, how happens it that that bias is never manifested till the mind receives another from circumstances? Perhaps the answer to this would be, that the mind was naturally endowed with a propensity to receive a bias for a particular art or science! A poet is a child of nature, inasmuch as it is impossible for him to be a poet, unless nature shall have first very forcibly imprinted her image upon his imagination. But it should not be supposed, that only those are poets whose works have met the public eye with approbation. It only requires particular trains of circumstances, which occur in the lives of thousands, to constitute poets, and yet very few are there whom the world dignify by that

appellation. A poet's mind should bend before every blast, like the willow; his heart should vibrate musically, like the strings of the Eolian lyre, responsive to every breeze.—It is an early affection for nature that produces the poet's enjoyment. All nature forms the kindred of his soul; without her, all is void and chaotic. All men would be poets, if they would give up their minds, uncramped by the world's folly and opinions, to the early contemplation of the works of the Deity they adore. Poor, foolish worldling! a poet is not the creature of the study, the slave of the press, the dependant on the public he despises. His mind is not words; it is feeling, the feeling of happiness and harmony, of which a poet only can be conscious. And yet the Deity only destined a few of us to such feelings; few, indeed, are the number whom he has marked out as his elect for such happiness! Infancy is the bright dawn of poetry, because then the mind is open to every impression, and

free from every care. Children are all poets, till the dark clouds of poverty hide the beams with which the world is too prophane to be illumined; till the frosts of hardheartedness have nipped the flowers in the bud, that would have perfumed every gale, in our progress through this region of mortality.

The ear for music.—This is one of those properties which is most of all considered innate, and with least reason. All men have ears, but, it is said, all men have not ears organized with equal delicacy *by nature*. This is said, but it is not proved; and if we have reason to believe that circumstance is the power that forms this organization, on the side of circumstance stands the only proof that can be produced. Children grow up without any particular attachment to music, who have not early in life been accustomed to hear it; and those who have been often where it was to be heard, have had ears *naturally*

adapted to the concords. Music was, in Greece, made an object of education, and he who did not understand it, was not politely educated: the same attention to music was paid in the 16th century in England; and there is yet, I believe, extant, a book which belonged to Queen Elizabeth, which our most skilful musicians would not play from without considerable study. That all men of polite education can be taught music, as all have at some periods been taught it, cannot be denied. Had all those nations in which music was a part of education, ears for the science innately?—or, is it not more probable that all men could be taught it, and all men can, whenever fashion makes it indispensable?

Vocal music was most probably produced by accident; perhaps from the emission of a sound in an uncommon exertion of the voice, which, happening to be pleasing to the ear, was repeated, and modulations formed from

it. I shall be told, that if it did appear accidental, that person may have had an ear who discovered it, and it might not have been discovered, had not the sound occurred to him, but to some one without an *ear*. Lord Montboddo, with the singularity which attaches to every part of his writings, has said that men originally sung their words!* Now, if this

* His Lordship has first stated, that in all countries whence man and civilization proceeded, there was more musical talent than in those to which they went. After giving a variety of instances of languages, more or less musical, as a proof of the truth of his arguments, he refers to the Chinese.

“The question is, whether they first learned to articulate their monosyllables, and then learned these musical notes by which they distinguish them one from another? Or, whether they first practised music, and then learned articulation? And it appears to me very much more probable, that, having first sung, whether by instinct, or having learned it from the birds, and after that having learned from some nation, with which they had an intercourse, to articulate a few words, they still continued to sing, and, as it was very natural, joined their musical notes to their articulate sounds, and so formed a musical language.” See *Montboddo on the Origin and Progress of Language*, vol. vi. 1792.

Whether all men originally sang or not, it is plainly a great argument against innate musical ears, that every native of China, by the nature of his language, must be in some degree a vocal musician.

were true, we have only to consider all mankind placed in similar circumstances with the first race of men, and all would be vocal musicians without innateness. If all were not vocal musicians originally, how will it be proved that the man to whom accident first discovered vocal music, was organized differently from the rest of mankind?

Instrumental music has been deduced from vocal, but it appears to me, that accident had the greatest share in its production. We will suppose a person forming an instrument of hollow metal, the sound of his hammer upon its side might attract his notice, and to vary the tones, he might construct several similar vessels.* Thus might originate the invention of bell music. A man, in blowing his arrow through a tube, might perceive a whistling noise, which some crevice in the tube had occasioned as his breath passed through it; he

* M. Reaumur traces the invention of bells to this source.

would repeat the experiment; his neighbours would modify, and hence might be produced the wind instruments of the flute kind. In corroboration of this, it may be observed, that most of the flutes discovered amongst the savages, whose manners approach nearest to the original men, are blown from the end, and not side-ways, as is common in more civilized countries. The original thread for sewing together garments, &c. was formed from the slit sinews of animals, and it is most probable that stringed instruments might be made from some of these, after a sound had been accidentally struck from them, whilst under the operations of stretching and drying. All musical instruments may be accounted for from some accident; and why, if the original music and musicians are accidental, are all future musicians to be considered as formed so by the Almighty from the womb? It seems as if the innatists wished to make the Deity profit from the inventions of his creatures, as no

man was an *innate* musician till after music was invented !

M. Buffon and other writers have investigated the anatomy of the ear, in hopes of coming thereby to some explanation of the *ear* for music, and the attachment which some animals appear to show to the tones of instruments. These phenomena they have endeavoured to explain by an equality in the reception of sound by both ears ; but this, I think, depends entirely on conjecture. That the ears must have some particular minute differences in conformation, in order to be different in their mode of receiving sounds, is evident ; but it is also evident, that that conformation, whatever it may be, is the consequence of circumstance ; thus, a dull ear must have been made dull by being unaccustomed to sounds, and a quick ear, quick, by having been accustomed to them to a remarkable degré.

Dogs, in a domestic state, in general howl at the sound of a musical instrument, and make such a noise as to induce spectators to imagine they are imitating the tones they hear; this, however, is only circumstantial, for a pack of harriers, or fox hounds, when they hear the hunter's horn winding, instead of howling, will come all silent and obedient to be coupled by the huntsman. War horses are pleased with the sound of the trumpet, whilst those less accustomed to it would manifest every possible symptom of displeasure; and horses in a circus, as those well know who have them under their care, are frequently enraged when the tunes to which they have been taught to move are discontinued for others. If brutes, then, which from their less acute senses seem to require more the interference of Providence in their favor, acquire their attachment to particular pursuits of men circumstantially, what reason has man, who is so much better endowed, to

assert that before his birth he was an object of his Creator's peculiar protection?

So circumstantial are our ideas of music, that I will venture to assert, if a man were to be educated in the hearing of catcals, geese, asses, and hogs, as encouraging or animating music, as the drum and fife and trumpet are now considered to be, he would consider the latter as most discouraging and disheartening, as being concords, and of course opposite to the other, which was most discordant. Difference in associations produces such differences in ear almost daily. The creaking of a door may affect two men in an opposite manner. The one might consider it disagreeable, because it reminded him of the door of a prison in which he had long been immured; the other might imagine it pleasing, because it brought to his recollection the door of the habitation in which had been spent the happiest years of his childhood. The war whoop

of the North American Indians is considered by themselves as most spirit-stirring, while to an European, a more horrible combination of discords could not have been invented. If our *ears* for music are not formed by circumstance, men have yet to learn that they ever received any education.

We have now considered all kinds of genius that are generally supposed to require the assistance of innateness to bring them forward, though circumstances alone can advance them to perfection; and, in support of our arguments, we now proceed to examine the commencement of the lives of several persons who have been considered remarkable for their extraordinary geniuses and capacities.*

* On commencing this examination, I refer my readers to an Essay of Mr Bigland, on the influence of circumstance on character. *Bigland's Essays*, 2 vols, octavo; printed at Doncaster.

Political characters.—There are no very remarkable circumstances extant which directed Demosthenes to make himself an orator, but those which we know were sufficient to have a very considerable effect. The conduct of his guardians deprived him of his estate, and, in a place like Athens, this was a dreadful privation amongst those who might have been his equals, but who considered him far their inferior. The recovery of that was sufficient to influence a man to immense exertions, where none would exert themselves for him without emolument, which he could not bestow. When he declaimed in public for his property, every person who had become acquainted with the circumstances of his case, would applaud perhaps the matter, and the occasion of his speaking, rather than the manner and the execution of his speech. By a favorable decision, seeing himself at once in possession of all his former affluence, his whole soul was fixed upon befriending the

state which had done so much in his favor.— His exertions to become eloquent, and his consequent success, are too well known to require comment. The only question is, did his exertions form an adequate cause of his success? And who can imagine that a man who underwent such fatigue in curing himself of stammering and awkward gestures; who retired night and day to a solitary cavern to imitate and transcribe the best authors and orators of his time, and to form a manner of his own; who in fact had RESOLVED to be an orator, would return from his labors, lamenting that he had no “genius,” and that without “capacity” every effort was unavailing! He knew that exertion would produce what innateness could not effect; that a mind which *he had made* strong, would shew its strength; and that circumstances alone had produced the resolution of which the state would reap the benefit.

John Sobieski, the patriot-king of Poland, was born in an advantageous situation; educated for a statesman and a soldier, and his genius broke forth, as the innatists would say, by the accidental examination of a tombstone. *He exerted* himself; and his brothers and relations were not so famous, because they did not fall into trains of circumstances equally fortunate.*

The famous Prince of Conde was attended by domestics who were chosen for their virtues; his tutor and assistant were equally worthy and learned; and unremitted attention was paid to his daily exercises, bodily and mental, and who will say that this did not form the character so equally famous in the cabinet and the field.†

* Palmer's Life of John Sobieski.

† His infant education was entrusted to citizens' wives, instead of ladies of the court; and he was brought up in the pure air of the country, instead of Paris. *See his Life by Deformaux; Paris 1767.*

Christina, Queen of Sweden, and daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, when very young, on occasion of a salute of cannon having been given to her father, clapped her hands and exclaimed, “more, more!” This is, no doubt, a proof of the innateness of courage which she had imbibed from her father!—The fact requires some explanation. Children, it should be recollected, are naturally fond of noise, and are only frightened at those objects at which they see others express fear. No child is afraid the first time it rides in a carriage, till it sees its mother or nurse afraid of the unevennesses of the road. When children shew that they can stand undismayed within hearing of a dreadful noise, or within sight of a terrible object, it is not courage that they display; it is insensibility to danger, for they are unacquainted with any dangerous consequences from either the noise or the object. The brave man shows himself fearless in the midst of danger, but he knows and

appreciates the evils by which he is surrounded.

Mr Pitt is a singular instance of the effects of an attention to any particular accomplishment. Born with a thousand advantages, the greatest possible care was taken to fill his mind with political knowledge, and to grace it by elocution;* and with a strict application to every thing that could advance him in these attainments, what need is there to wonder that he excelled.

But a more singular instance of circumstantial education than any yet mentioned, because more prominent and universally acknowledged, is the progress of Napoleon Buonaparte to the throne of France. The son of a man of respectability, who had shewn himself brave under General Paoli, and born

* Gifford's Life of Pitt. See also an excellent sketch in Rees's Cyclopaedia.

in the very crisis of his country's fate, the circumstances of his birth produced in him a military ardour, which blazed forth in the exercises of the Brienne academy. Accidental superiority was *improved* by continued success and constant application, and the boy who had been victorious in laying siege to fortifications of snow, became the conqueror at Marengo. And who would assert that the man bred in the tumult of revolutions was indebted to innateness for his promotion? If there ever were one man more indebted to fortune than another, it was Buonaparte; he had the penetration to perceive that circumstances regulate equally men's actions and opinions; and when he saw one string in the harp of "Chance" vibrating in his favor, he struck it again and again, till every chord sounded in unison.

Poets.—William Shakspeare was born at Stratford upon Avon, which, if in a flat coun-

try, is nevertheless picturesque, and was brought up amongst a class of people who little disguise their manners, at a period when frankness was a virtue.* He was by an accident occasioned by his unfortunate wildness obliged to seek refuge in the metropolis. His wildness had kept his mind in a state of acti-

* It is singular that Dr. Gall and Helvetius should think of differing, the former from the latter, upon so trivial a circumstance as the trade of Shakspeare's father. Dr. Gall says he was a butcher; Helvetius says he was a woolcomber. The reason why the butcher account is adopted, is, that there is a *proof* of innateness in an anecdote that is related of the young dramatist. It is said that he would sometimes kill a calf, and he would "do it in a high style, and make a speech."* Woolcombers and butchers are not very far asunder, and probably the dispute originated in the father's pursuing one trade, and some one of Shakspeare's relations, whom he sometimes visited, professing the other. Whether he was a butcher or woolcomber, however, we will suppose his son sometimes to kill a calf and make a speech over it. He would not surely do that without some cause, without some exhibition of players or mountebanks had given him the idea; and after all, this is only one of the foolish recollections which people love to seize, when they see a man called great, in order to *prove* that he was always something different from themselves.

* See some miscellaneous collections, published with letters from the Bodleian Library, 3 vols. octavo.

vity, and feeling the necessity there was of his procuring himself a livelihood, he determined that his profession should be mental. It is most probable that he turned player first, and finding his talent, or, as the innatists would say, his “genius” did not lay that way, retired to the closet with a natural determination to write, when he could not act. It is supposed that we have not his first dramatic essays; and, before he became generally celebrated, he must have consulted and studied the famous dramatic authors who preceded him.—He saw the difference between London manners and those of home, and of course, in his best pieces, he has given us circumstances supposed to have happened at his birth place.—None of his fables are invented; passages which we most admire, were copied from the mouths or examples of others;* and he has

* There is extant an anecdote which shows plainly the manner in which Shakspeare procured many of his best scenes and ideas. It is a letter from a fellow of Christ-church College,

followed history with astonishing minuteness.*
By the great character of superior nature

and a member of a club which used to assemble at the Globe, in Blackfriars, to one Marle.

“ Friend Marle,—I must desyre that my syster hyr wat che, and the cookerie book you promysed, may be sente bye the man. I never longed for thy company more than last night : we were all very merrie at the Globe, when Ned Alleyn did not scruple to affyrme pleasauntely to thy friende Will, that he had stolen his speeche about the qualytyes of an actor’s excellencye in Hamlet hys Trajedye, from conversations manyfold whych had passed betweene them, and opinyons given by Alleyn touchinge the subjecte. Shakspeare did not take this talke in good sorte : but Jonson put an end to the strife with wittylve remarkinge, ‘ This affaire needeth no contentione ; you stole it from Ned, no doubte ; do not marvel. Have you not seen him act tymes out of number ? Believe me most syncerilie,

Your’s, G. PEEL.”

Alleyn was one of the best actors of his day, and though the compliment of Jonson (Ben), seems to take off all suspicion of the immediate theft with which he was charged, it gives us an additional proof to the many instances already narrated in the best commentaries on Shakspeare, that he was a man who paid no attention to his genius, when he could get any thing else to help him forward.

The anecdote I have transcribed is from Dodsley’s Annual Register for 1770. Its not having appeared in any edition of his works, is my excuse for giving it here.

* Shakspeare says,—“ Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.” Now it is well known that Richard the third rode

which his plays have acquired, he has superseded the authors who wrote before him, so that some whose nature was almost equal, are forgotten since it became the fashion to praise Shakspeare. There was, no doubt, some minute circumstance which directed him to the stage and the drama, perhaps the example of one of his wild friends; be that as it may, we have related too many circumstances, to suffer his excellence to be attributed to his innate powers.

It may seem singular that I should instance next a person comparatively so lately known as

through Leicester on a great white horse, which is said to have been his favorite.

Shakspeare's great genius appears to consist in giving as many general particulars as possible to his readers—particular facts with so much general ornament as to make them pleasing to every mind of taste, and sometimes general circumstances, so artfully contrived as to appear to every person to whom they are represented as in some degree particular. These, and a strict reliance on nature, though more generally extraordinary and prominent nature than common, will give any man a poetical genius.

Robert Burns, but no man has perused the little he has written, without acknowledging that, for adherence to nature, he might securely be called the Shakspeare of Scotland. He deserves particular notice, if it were for no other reason than that he has described the genius of his country throwing her inspiring mantle over him whilst at the plough. Though it is not accurately innate, there is something like innateness in the idea. But he himself gives us the origin of his genius:—" Though it cost the
" schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an
" excellent English scholar, and by the time
" I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a
" critic in substantives, verbs, and participles.
" In my infancy and boyish days too, I owed
" much to an old woman who resided in the
" family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of
" tales and songs, concerning devils, ghosts,
" faeries, brownies, witches, warlocks, spun-

“kies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead lights,
“wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, en-
“chanted towers, dragons, and other trum-
“pery. This cultivated the latent seeds of
“poetry.” The latter part of this sentence
may be looked upon as an *argument* in favor
of innate genius, but, in another part of the
same letter, he says of some other person, “I
“saw no reason why I might not rhyme as
“well as he.”*

Dr. Johnson was the son of a bookseller,
and his father, as he somewhere characteri-
zes him, was a shrewd man, and an observer
of the times. His father's shop was the only
one of the kind in Litchfield, and for many
miles round; and he was so short-sighted as
to be unable to join in the sports of his com-
panions; nay, he could not go to school with-
out an attendant. The Doctor mentions

* See a letter of Burns to Dr. Moore, in Currie's edition of his works.

many of the books which he read for his amusement, and, as it might naturally be expected, his peculiar opportunities and situation produced an immense difference between him and his associates, and much to his advantage. That difference gradually widened, from a superiority to his original companions, to a superiority above the literature of his time.— From the religious books the shop of his father furnished, may be traced his puritanical bigotry; his melancholy proceeded from the disorders with which he was afflicted, and his overbearing disposition, from his contriving to be the head of almost every company of which he was a member. Concentred within himself, his composition became his chief care, and his poetry was beautiful, because his sight enabled him only to perceive the bold beauties of nature, whilst it was too defective to suffer him to investigate her minutely.

Cowley and Boileau were both influenced to become poets by the perusal of celebrated authors; the former wrote early, from having found accidentally where he sate, the Faery Queen of Spenser; the latter did not write till he was forty, because till then no circumstance impelled him.

Rousseau did not become an author till he was forty years of age, and not then, till an academical question drew him into the profession*.

The famous Lopez de Vega was the son of a poet, and he himself was made one by his father's constant care to turn every rising idea in the mind of his son towards poetry.

Laurence Sterne, (for who does not reckon a man of his feelings amongst poets?) while

* See his letter to the Archbishop of Paris, on the subject of his life.

yet a boy at school, at Halifax, in Yorkshire, wrote his name in large letters on the ceiling of the school-room.* The assistant chastised him severely, but the master praised him, and would not let the inscription be erased, for, he said, he always thought Sterne was “a boy of genius.” Might not the master’s idea of Sterne’s genius be accidental, and that very compliment be the occasion of his exertions, and his afterwards manifesting such superior abilities? Or, perhaps, the master was a person of more than common penetration; knew the slight causes of genius, and sometimes paid undue compliments to induce application.

Christopher Smart and Robert Fergusson were both too weak to have any play-fellows but books, and both became poets, because both were accustomed to the same kind of reading.

* See his account of his own life, in a letter to his daughter.

The unfortunate Cowper himself relates the cause of his poetry. “Dejection of spirits, “which I suppose may have prevented many “a man from becoming an author, made me “one. I find constant employment necessary, “and therefore I take care to be constantly “employed.”*

Armstrong and Mickle both lived on the banks of the Esk, and those who have ever been there, will know how likely it was for persons in their circumstances to become poets.

Thomas Wharton, once poet laureat, used to relate, that when his father, accompanied by his brother and himself, was returning from seeing Windsor Castle, the first said in his hearing, “Thomas goes on, and takes “no notice of any thing he has seen.” To

* See his letter to his cousin. Hayley's Life of Cowper, vol. i.

this observation, Wharton attributed much of his *castellated* poetry.

Falconer, the author of the *Shipwreck*, was bred to the sea, and by some accident was impelled to write a poem, for which *the circumstances of his life* had qualified him.

Is there, then, any thing like a shadow of innateness in any one of the instances we have adduced? We may be answered in the negative; and we shall, no doubt, be told, that circumstances do not disprove the existence of innateness, though they alone can bring it forth! If, however, the very power that is said to bring into the world another power of disputed being cannot *prove* its existence, it must be left for proof till we have acquired the experience of a few thousand years more than we have at present.

Musical men.—Young Crotch, of Norwich,

appears to have been one of the most remarkable musicians, from the early commencement of his attachment to the science. The publications of the time (1778-9, &c.) extolled him as a prodigy of genius. But was this prodigy educated in the woods by wolves; or, did he make an instrument in a wilderness, and play upon it, where never instrument was made, or played upon before? Far from it. His father, an ingenious mechanic, built an organ in the same room in which the child generally remained, and having been constantly in the habit of playing almost from the first moment after the child's attention was attracted, that attention gradually, as is natural, became fixed to the most prominent object which was presented to it.* The organ had been played upon from the period of

* Those who have ever read Mad. de Genlis' *Knights of the Swan*, will recollect the interesting account which she gives of the effect the organ had, when first heard by the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid, and they will almost be tempted to forget that

the child's birth, till he was a year and a half old, and then, and not till then, was any symptom of pleasure shewn for the organ.— If there is any wonder in all this, it is, that the child had not shewn his gratification at hearing the music sooner. Then it was so astonishing to perceive a child touch the key notes of an instrument to have any particular tune played that it wanted ! Who does not recognize in this the natural principle of imitation. The first note or two of the tunes the father played most frequently were all the child could remember, and if it could have remembered them all, it would have touched them all, because its father did so before it.— A monkey would have done the same. But, then, it was confessed that the child never

the story is fiction, from the appearance of truth it carries with it.

There are numerous instances of people fainting when they first heard this instrument, or rather combination of instruments, played upon, and yet a new and well-played, full-toned organ, could not make a child a musician, without the interference of innateness !

played a tune till after a better player than ordinary, a Mrs Lutman, had been at his father's, and then, when he was two years old and three weeks, he learnt to play *God save the King*. We are told, in an account written by Dr. Burney, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, and by various other accounts, that the father and mother were honest working people. That they were working people, is one of the greatest possible arguments against the fact, that the child played of his own accord upon the instrument; and the man who would believe that young Crotch had not been taught, and taught by great exertion too, to play upon the organ, would stretch his credulity to believe that this world was an egg laid by an enormous hen from Mahomet's paradise. Dr. Burney says, “It
“ has likewise been imagined by some, that
“ every child might be taught music in the
“ cradle, if the experiment were made; but
“ to those it may with truth be said, that

“such an experiment is *daily* made on every
“child, by every mother and nurse that is
“able to form a tune, on every part of the
“globe. In Italy, the *ninne nonne*, or lulla-
“bies, are fragments of elegant melodies, &c.
“and those, though they help to form the
“national taste, are not found to stimulate
“the attention of Italian children to melody,”
&c. &c. This is the *argument* of Dr. Burney, who does not appear to have known that the stronger a sound is, the more forcibly does it affect the drum of the ear, and that an organ sounds more forcibly than a woman’s “lullaby!” Till I can hear of another child whose attention was attracted in the same manner to *an organ*, and who did not become a musical genius, I shall not be dissatisfied with my own arguments, nor even then, till I can be shewn an exact similarity of circumstances.

Handel early took a fancy for music and

musical instruments, which some circumstance had given him ; but what this circumstance was, none of his biographers have informed us. His friends had designed him for another profession, and therefore tried every means of prevailing on him to relinquish a pursuit they considered by no means to his interest. In vain, said those friends, when they saw their efforts unavailing, that nature was opposed. In vain, I would say, did they oppose the *disposition* which circumstances had produced. At first he pursued, secretly, the profession he was openly forbidden, till his parents consented to have him *taught* music. And how do you explain, cry some, the difference in the effect of circumstances ; some men will cling to a profession, in spite of every opposition, and some will yield, when requested, and follow the profession for which they were designed by their parents ? This is plainly explicable by circumstances. According as the *genius* has imbibed more or less

a spirit of self-willed independence, or as those who wish him to change his profession use mild or tyrannical means of influencing him, the change is effected, or all endeavours to bring it about are obstinately resisted. Benvenuto Cellini, who had adopted the profession of a sculptor and jewel engraver, was commanded to learn to play upon the flute, by his father, in a most tyrannical manner; he refused, as might have been expected; but, when in a dream he saw his parent almost dying from his refusal, and beseeching him, if he would save his life, to apply himself to music, he begun to learn flute-playing, and soon acquired considerable excellence.*

Players and dramatic authors.—Garrick was accustomed in his infancy to the sight of dramatic performances, and was consequently influenced to the stage.†

* See his Life written by himself.

† See Boswell's Life of Johnson, and Davies' Life of Garrick.

Tate Wilkinson, the well-known northern stage manager, was directed to the stage in the same manner, as was that charming actress, George Ann Bellamy.*

Henderson first imbibed a notion of theatricals, from a volume of Shakspeare, which his mother gave him to read when very young.

Cooke was very early in life drawn by his play-fellows behind the scenes of a theatre; the amusement he procured there pleased him, and, by degrees, his fondness increased into a passion for the life of a performer.†

But as singular an instance of the effect of circumstances as was ever known, at present exists, and is one of the brightest ornaments the English stage ever possessed. Mr Kean,

* See Memoirs of his own life, by Tate Wilkinson, and George Ann Bellamy's Apology for her own life.

† See Dnnlap's Memoirs of Cooke, 2 vols. octavo.

if we may believe the best accounts which have been given of his early life, performed the parts of devils and cupids at the age of two years ! Indeed I need only refer my readers to any authentic account of this extraordinary man they can procure, and they will find a series of circumstances gradually producing a genius that commands almost universal admiration, and to which even his enemies allow the merit of originality.

Parents frequently complain of the foolish fancies which their children have taken for theatricals, whilst they overlooked the cause of such fancies, which originated in their own conduct. Those who have already become stage-struck, should be allowed full vent to their passion, and it will most probably be overwhelmed by disgust. To avoid such disagreeable circumstances, however, children should not be allowed to visit the theatre, even to see George Barnwell and the Christ-

mas Pantomime, till they were convinced that all men were not naturally designed for the performance of tragedy and comedy. Parents ridiculously imagine that such fancies are inevitable at a particular age; but if they did not send their children to the theatre, because Mrs. this, and Mrs. that, send theirs, they would soon perceive the fortunate result, and we should have no more stage-struck apprentices.

I cannot cite a better instance of a generally literary man, who owed his propensities to circumstance, than Mr. Gibbon. He was, in his infancy, weak, and clumsy at the common amusements of youth; and, therefore, required a substitute at home for the exercise in which he could not partake with his play-fellows. His aunt's library furnished him with this substitute, and that and other repositories he ransacked with avidity. By a stock of literary information thus acquired, he laid a

foundation for future eminence, which he soon displayed for his own recreation, after he had been sent, by his father's displeasure, to Lausanne, for having turned catholic. By reflections on his own folly, his *religious* opinions were soon fixed, and, in every transaction of his after life, the effect of early circumstances was predominant.

Divines.—Dr. Priestley was made religious by the instructions of a calvinistic aunt with whom he resided in his youth, and every one who has perused his life, knows the circumstances which made him an unitarian, and afterwards confirmed him in his faith.

Dr. Geddes was born in a cottage, in which the bible was the most attractive object, and the religious life of his parents and the neighbourhood in which they lived, will sufficiently account for his extensive biblical application, and its consequences.

Painters and sculptors.—Hans Holbein's father was a correct painter, though he never attained to any considerable eminence.

Joseph of Arpino, or Giaseppino, was carried to Rome very young as a color grinder, and catching the enthusiasm of his employers, he became famous in their profession.

Gessner, the son of the author of the *Idyls*, became a painter from the instructions and example of his father.

Benjamin West, whilst a child, in America, drew a likeness of a sleeping infant sister.—Whether parental fondness thought well of his sketch, or it really happened to be extraordinary, we are not informed, but he was *encouraged* to pursue the profession, and became a painter.*

* Galt's *Life and Studies of West*.

George Morland's father was a painter in crayons; "like most children, he imitated the
" employments of those around him, and fre-
" quently amused himself with the pencil."*
He was encouraged, and his fame is known.

At the birth of Michael Angelo, "Mercury
" and Venus were in conjunction with Jupi-
" ter for the second time;" at that period ju-
dicial astrology was in vogue, and it was pro-
phesied that Michael would be a famous man,
particularly in the arts of "painting, sculp-
" ture, and architecture;" add to this, that
his nurse was the wife of a stone mason; her
father had been of the same profession, and
we shall not wonder that Michael became a
sculptor, when the chisel was his play-thing.†

A prophecy, or a kind of augury, was ta-
ken at the birth of Benvenuto Cellini, which

* Dawe's Life of G. Morland.

† Duppa's Life of M. Angelo, quarto, p. 3.

produced nearly the same effect upon him, as that we have just related did upon Michael Angelo.

Naturalists.--Saussure's father was an agriculturalist, and he followed his example. He gradually became fond of minutely investigating plants, and at length was made a confirmed botanist by the conversation of Bonnet.

Linnæus's "father was a singular lover of
"gardening. The smallness of his income
"obliged him at the same time to make the
"best of husbandry. Flowers were the first
"things they gave the smiling babe, and it
"seemed to take a *natural* delight in the va-
"riety of their colors." He appears to have
been partly educated by a botanist of the name
of Lauaerius.*

Thus I have given what I conceived the

* Stoever's Life of Linnæus, translated by Trapp, p. 3—5.

circumstances which produced many of the geniuses that are considered innate, and on the most careful examination I could make of many hundred characters besides, I have not been able to find the least argument in favor of innate genius. Where such *arguments* are to be found, but in the lives of the men who had genius, the innatists alone can determine.

Many have actually allowed the influence of circumstances on the human character, who are the firmest advocates of innate powers; and they say, with Dr. Johnson, that the true genius is a mind of great natural strength, influenced by accident to some particular pursuit. This is only capacity. But if they allow that circumstances form the human character, where is the proof that the mind was *originally* stronger than common? We know it is often stronger after birth; but that is from circumstances, and from circumstances only; and we have no reason to infer, either

of the mind, the body or any other thing whatever, the primary to have been the same as is the present situation, and differing only in degree. Because the mind is great now, it was great at first ! Because the mind is poor and imbecile now, it was weak and poor before it existed ! These are the *arguments* in favor of innateness. We fear we have occupied our readers too long in answering such assertions, which, if they could prove genius to be innate, would first prove the innate poverty of genius in the minds of those who made them.

Our readers will see at a glance the whole course of argument we have pursued, as we shall now proceed, in the conclusion, to sum up our positions.

In the first place, we have shewn that what is properly denominated the mind is not innate, for the mind is made up of ideas, and

is, in fact, a power which is composed of them; that a certain repetition of ideas upon a sort of blank of the senses produces the power by which they are recognized and exercised, and that, therefore, no ideas being innate, nothing can be innate which is the consequence of ideas. If no persons have minds when they are first born, it is plain no one man can be constituted mentally superior to another; all must be equally mindless.—Supposing the mind to be innate, however, we have proceeded to argue upon the supposed original superiority. We have shewn that there is no original superiority known at the birth, and of course there is nothing but conjecture to prove that there is any superiority, except for circumstances; that an original superiority is contrary to the universal benevolence of the Almighty, and when believed in, is likely to produce, and has produced, the most horrible consequences; and that when the evil does not extend to its

greatest height, the belief has a bad tendency, by preventing a desire for improvement, and destroying hope of emendation. We have proceeded to shew that capacity is formed by reasoning and memory; and that, therefore, neither of these being innate, because no man can reason without ideas, or recollect, when he has had nothing to remember, it is impossible that extraordinary capacity, in other words, original mental superiority, can be innate, which is composed of reasoning and memory particularly powerful. Reasoning and memory, then, plainly appear, by our arguments, to be formed by circumstances directed to the mind by education or otherwise, in a state of civilization; because we have had no instance of any person having been secluded all his life from society, who had these faculties in common with the most illiterate citizen, and there have been instances of men who have been found so secluded, almost literally without minds. That idiots are not

considered as men by philosophy, we have assumed, because they have in no respect either genius or capacity ; and that they can form no objection to our doctrine, because their infirmity proceeds entirely from some accident at present unknown, but most probably the negligence of the nurse in exciting the attention at a proper period, or some concussion or disorganization in the womb, or at the time of parturition. Under the head of mal-organization, we have shewn that defects which are discovered in the brain are more probably owing to the want of education, than the want of education to them ; and that all imperfections, as of deafness, dumbness, blindness, &c. are only circumstantial obstructions to the capacity, and not arguments for natural differences. We have then taken as concise a survey of craniology as was consistent with the importance at present attached to the system, and have shewn that it is without foundation, except in the head of

Dr. Gall; thus, I hope, destroying one of the great objections which have been raised up to the arguments of Helvetius on our subject, in the present times. From creation, and from general acceptation, we have then drawn arguments in favor of original equality of capacity, the latter of which being from the universal consent of mankind, has every presumption of truth in its favor.

Genius, which is particular, as capacity was general superiority, we have endeavoured to shew is not innate, even from its most appropriate definition; as indeed, how can that be innate, the foundation of which is accidental. We have adopted the definition of Dr. Gerard, and shewn that it is correct, as well as inconsistent with innateness. That men of genius are the same as other men, and that no man is designed by nature for a profession, we have proved, we hope, satisfactorily. After shewing that men of extraordinary

powers are believed in general much greater than they are, from a kind of infatuation, and that the phrases “it is my nature,” “he soon excelled his tutor,” and the like, prove nothing like innateness, we have proceeded to show that there is no evidence that mankind are of more than one species, and that, therefore, there can be no large intellectual difference, i. e. between the inhabitants of one climate and another, except from circumstances. We have then entered into a short examination of the genius of language and nations, and shewn that they are all circumstantial; after which, we have demonstrated that music, painting, and poetry, are necessary arts, or discovered accidentally, and therefore cannot be innate, but must be circumstantial.—As a proof of the effect of circumstances, we have instanced a number of characters formed by accident, arranging them under their several classes.

If, after a survey of our arguments, our readers should consider themselves as not yet at a proper conclusion, I am sorry that I have not been able to place my doctrine in a more decisive situation ; but I trust I shall have influenced many to reflection, who had before seen error in the garb of truth.

On taking a view of my own reasoning, I fear much that what I said in the commencement, about the novelty of what I had written, may be looked upon as egotism and presumption. When an author first examines his own labor, he may be compared to a man standing at the base of what he thinks a pyramid, which seems to him to rise from the broadest possible foundation, and to pierce the heavens with its summit, whilst a distant spectator views it but as a hillock, and passes onward uninterested. I now leave my essay, however, in the hands of a disinterested public, confident that if a man endeavour to con-

vince them which is truth, they will at least weigh what he has done, before they declare it to be erroneous.

A P P E N D I X.

“—*WHEN* most of what is best or worst proceeds from the institution and practice of society?” p. 24. It may be considered singular by some, that I should not have allowed the text to stand “when what is best,” &c. It is true, that, in fact, every thing that is bad or good, is only so as society appoints; for in this world we know of no other punishment but that of human law; and though there are some crimes, such as ingratitude, infidelity, &c. which that does not reach, yet they are only criminal as they relate to mankind, for to mankind only can they or any other such crimes do injury. The words “most of” will be plainly perceived to have been inserted as a palliative in favor of those, (for such there be) who imagine that frail humanity can injure its Creator!

“*But, if man does not always think, will not this be overthrown?*” p. 28. I supposed that the absence of thought at the birth might be foolishly imagined to be the same as a cessation from thought, at any other period when the mind was in existence; but to every rational person, this must plainly appear impossible. After a cessation from thought, we generally recollect something that happened previous to our ceasing to think, but immediately after birth we have no cessation from thought, for we have never thought at all.

“*Nothing can disprove universal equality, but arguments deduced from the existence of a particular Providence.*” p. 30. “*The Deity will be recognized;*” &c. p. 37. “—then we come to the absurd doctrine of a particular Providence, which can never be

“ true, unless there are two distinct natures in the one living and true God.” p. 199-200. These several expressions against a particular Providence require some comment. All men have an equal right to liberty, to a free government, &c. say some who uphold the arguments of innate superiority. Now, I confess, it appears to me impossible that all men in a free state can have a right to equal privileges, without they are all originally equal in intellect. For what, in well-governed states, are rulers chosen? For their minds. In all well-governed states, what causes great inequality of rank? The difference in minds. Now, if all men have not originally equal minds, is it not implied, that the Deity pursues a system of favoritism by dispensing his gift unequally? If there be another state after the present, does man carry with him his original mental superiority or inferiority? I appeal to christians, and ask them, Whether, if a man do carry with him such superiority or inferiority, he will not be eternally more happy or miserable than the rest of his fellow men? If a man do not carry with him the difference in soul from his fellow creatures of mankind, will not his soul be different from that which he possessed on earth? If his soul be innately and originally different, all men must have different degrees and notions of happiness in what is called heaven, and there can be nothing of that blessed communion which true christians expect. Many men are of the opinion, which we have mentioned, that all men have an equal right to liberty, &c. Now, those men, if the system of superior innateness be true, have ideas of greater benevolence inspired into them by the Creator, than the Creator himself acts upon.

I shall be told here, of my advocating the doctrine of necessity, and that if I make a man's actions, though circumstantial, proceed from necessity, I make the Deity equally partial with the innatists. Those who make such an assertion, however, do

not understand the doctrine. Philosophical necessity allows rational liberty. There is a necessity that man must act. His will wavers betwixt one act and another. The Deity, however, sees through his wavering, and knows what he will do finally. This is my conception of the doctrine of necessity, and I allow of necessity no farther than I have stated. There are many christians who do not believe in the eternity of future punishment: they imagine that the soul, when, as it were, purified, goes to a state of happiness prepared for all mankind. If, however, a particular Providence exist, it is plain, as I have said, that the Deity must have either two natures, one of universal benevolence and another of partiality, or only the latter.

“ That society is, as it should permanently exist, it is therefore impossible to determine.” p. 36. We shall here subjoin a few observations on education, which we think our doctrine requires, and which, if followed, might perhaps tend not a little to improve mankind individually and collectively. Nevertheless, if they are considered but as the wild dreams of an utopian, my readers will pardon them, when they see the intention with which they were communicated.

If all children take their characters, i. e. their differences in genius and capacity, from circumstances, then it is right to recommend a more pointed attention to circumstances in the commencement of education. Parents, therefore, should observe, that the education of the child does not commence with the teaching by a master. It begins from the moment that the senses are affected by external objects. Would it not then be adviseable to mark the first appearance of attention, to direct it with ease and judgment, and so gradually to influence the young mind, as to remove many of the difficulties of which instructors of early youth ridiculously complain as gifts or inflic-

tions of nature? And instead of allowing children to remain in indolent thoughtlessness and indirection, would it not be much better in parents, to collect all their experience, whatever it may be, and, by its exertion, to produce, (from the very birth, I may say), an attachment to the profession for which they see it most expedient that their sons or daughters should be designed? In this there would be no tyranny; for children when they are about to adopt some profession, are generally so irresolute; as to be obliged to refer to the better experience of their friends and relatives; but when they have been influenced as we advise, their whole mind and energy will exist for their own profession, and will turn every thing they hear and see to its advantage. I do not mean that children should be so educated as to be unable to mix in general company. General company and conversation should be as much resorted to as at present. I only mean that a sort of bias should be given to the mind, early enough to prevent all the disagreeable consequences of indecision, which the necessity of a choice in after life too frequently occasions. Such early influence upon the character, I am persuaded, would be productive of the most beneficial effects. Indeed, we have so many instances of what may be called nature's education, that I cannot but think, even if the mind were left, in particular situations, to run in its own course, instead of the method of pushing it forward which is now so common, we should have many men more skilful in the professions for which circumstances designed them, than if they had, which is too often the case, chosen a profession that they might say they belonged to it. I need not go farther in this part of my observations. Those who have well considered the influence of circumstances, will know how to appreciate what I have said.

I would have children taught as much of good and as little of evil as possible. If it could be done, I would prevent them from knowing evil even in name. They should be taught to do every

thing which is consistent with the welfare of human society, and nothing more; and with some art, I think children might be instructed to follow the path of rectitude, without knowing either the name of any human crime, or the actions which constitute it. It would be well, likewise, if children were taught their own language carefully from the first, as well as two, three, or more foreign languages. This would be difficult at first; but when those who were first taught became parents, if they held any rank in life, as indeed those must who first adopt the scheme, they would become teachers, and the plan gradually spreading downwards, the difficulty would decrease. I mention this for the great advancement of human knowledge, which would be the consequence. Much of the difficulty attending this plan would be obviated, if the learned would invent some standard of intercourse, some universal language, by which all the world might have an easy and pleasant communication. Numbers have written upon the subject, but nothing has yet been put in execution. If two or three nations were to contribute each a certain number of learned men, who had families, for the adoption of this mode of communication; by its being disseminated amongst their families and relations, its use would gradually approach nearer and nearer to unanimity.

I would caution the more wealthy and enlightened against bringing up their children with the usual notions about commerce, barter, profit and loss, &c. if ever they wish or hope to see the human race more dignified than at present. What is the end of commerce? Was it intended that men should spend their lives in going from land to land, and in escaping from danger after danger, for the mere gratification of the silly passion for gain, implanted in them by the erroneous principles of those who were entrusted with their education? If such ideas are to be implanted, why are they not ideas of mental gain, and not for the mere folly of sensual gratification? Commerce has been mistaken as to the extent of its advantages. Had men

been taught originally to seek their intellectual improvement, and not the means of creating and increasing luxury ; if they had not brought their ships home laden with spices, they would have been stored with accounts of the good they had done to themselves and others, by giving and receiving information. If they believe, as all nations of the world do now believe, that there is an hereafter, do they think that they are advancing themselves towards it, by the finer polish of their tables, or the increasing relish of their sauces ? Do not all the most rational imagine that they are approaching to a state of mental, not of corporeal pleasure ? And why, if they do, will they madly continue in their present senseless career ? Every time they see a better cargo landing at their wharfs than they had before, are they not expecting some new dainty will be the consequence ?—or, if not, that they are increasing the means they will leave their children for prosecuting the same endless traffic ? Every cargo that lands, increases the distaste of themselves and their children to the immortality they expect, and is bringing themselves nearer to the state of the brutes that perish. It was well said, that Great Britain would have been happier at this day with chairs and tables of her native oak, and food of her own produce, instead of tormenting ourselves and our fellow creatures, in order to procure the spices of India and the brightest mahogany. And what philosopher is there who would not say the same ; who would not lament that our government (I dare not calumniate it so far as to say our country) has become proverbial for the slaughter of the savage, to procure for themselves the dainties his home afforded, or power over his miserable children for their friends ? When the impartial voice of history shall be heard against the heads of our state, what scenes will not be disclosed of most murderous ambition ? And were those *men* that ordered and perpetrated the crimes that will be recounted ? They were men ; but surely Providence did not intend that they should continue in the present state of what they call *society*. It is the society of tigers. Dissimulation is the

creed of men, as they live at present, and their practice and their schemes are, to build their own fortunes on the ruin of their fellow mortals.

And if the more numerous portion of the people did not believe in a future state, but considered that their existence was ended by the last misery of their present situation, still, inasmuch as intellectual pleasures are the best, it cannot but be the most adviseable plan, to pursue them with greater avidity than those which are merely corporeal. In fact, it depends upon the state of the mind that we have any corporeal pleasure, for that which we call corporeal pleasure is enjoyed in a more refined manner, the more refined the intellect.

And what are all the quarrels and the wars and the troubles of mankind occasioned by? Are they not all produced by a desire either to acquire gold, or of gaining what will enable them to increase their coffers? It is only the state of society that requires any circulating medium; and as a crowd of savages would laugh to see men torturing one another for a yellow metal which is not so plentiful as any other, and therefore more sought after,—as the lowest stages of life would show a sovereign contempt of such scenes, so will the highest to which we are not yet arrived. The world and its provisions should be one great commonwealth; its inhabitants one great family. The philosophy of the Illuminati, properly so called, looks forward to a state of society, in which mankind will be as brethren, without government, save such family order as the patriarchs adopted. This is the state of society in which we may look for truth, and intellectual perfection,*—this is the state to which all good governments are bringing the people under their care. As all man-

* Without such a state of society, how can the prophecy ever be fulfilled which all true christians believe will one day come to pass—"The swords shall be beaten into plough shares and the spears into pruning hooks," and "every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, none rising up to make him afraid?"

kind are naturally good, so all mankind must naturally tend to a society in which good is predominant. Good will plainly be predominant in the state of society we have mentioned, and evil will be almost extirpated; for evil, and gold and worldly possessions, are always companions, and almost synonymous. Mr Malthus, and the herd of critics who have always followed his footsteps, may rail as they will at Mr Godwin for upholding such a brotherly society. Though I do not exactly follow the plan which Godwin has laid down, I think it right so far to make common cause with him, as to say a word to his calumniators. All their objections to him are to the consequences of his system. Now, when did they ever know his state of society tried? Wherever there was any thing like it, as there sometimes has been amongst some classes of Moravians, there has been the greatest possible happiness. And Mr Malthus and his friends may talk till doomsday about the misery resulting from such a state of society, and about the failure of provisions, the destruction of the human species, &c. "To know whether any proposition be true or false, it is a preposterous method to examine it by its *apparent* consequences."* Mr M. has said, that if Mr Godwin's plans were universally adopted, the society would perish in thirty years. It is impossible to say how far population would increase in such a state, or how far provisions would increase, when *all men had a share in their cultivation*, instead of, as now, being chiefly employed on other far different concerns; but it is most probable that provisions and consumers would still be proportioned. In such a state of society, there would not be the enormous waste which luxury now constantly produces.—Mankind would not live in crowded cities, and more room would be left for cultivation. Besides, many of the animal creation which are now used for domestic purposes, would become articles of food. In short, there is always such an equality be-

* Burke's Vindication of Natural Society, p. 1.

twixt food and consumers, that I think it would be impossible for mankind to starve in any situation. But at some future period I shall enter more fully on these considerations.

In any other state of society than that at present established, truth ought to be known to be such by the evidence brought forward to each succeeding mind, and men should not take the dicta of their ancestors as unquestionable. Axioms might be considered true without examination, and what was in one age a subject of disputation, will, in succeeding time, gradually approach to the nature of axiom. Thus, much labour is prevented even to those who study things from the commencement. But in nothing ought the careful examination we have recommended to be practised more, than with regard to subjects which respect the present welfare and future happiness; and where the latter is concerned, the former is equally a subject of consideration. Now, the general practice in religion, christian, mahometan, and almost every other, is to educate children in the ceremonies and doctrines which belong to them. To make the cross, for instance, with one sect, and the genuflexion with another; to consider Friday sacred with one, Saturday with a second, and Sunday with a third; with one to make restrictions in the use of meats, with another to drink no wine. Would it not be much more adviseable to bring children up in the principles of sound morality, without connexion with any sect, till they were able to judge for themselves which sect was least exceptionable? It may be objected to this, that there is a text which requires children to be brought to Christ, or, as those who make it an objection say, to his church: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." The reason why Jesus said this is evident. He wished as many children to be brought to him as possible, in order that the recollection of him might be strong in their imaginations as they grew up, and thus they would assist in disseminating the doctrines he

preached. If, in after years, the children could not remember the remarkable circumstances which they beheld, the enthusiastic recollections of their aged relations, on their death-beds, would hand down sufficient for them to transmit to their children. Ridiculous is the conduct of those preachers, who, in the spirit of bigotry, request children to be brought to their places of worship, for the inculcation of their religion, on the foundation of this text. For what else is it but bigotry, ye christians, to educate your children in the faith of your fathers? Is it not common, in the transactions of life, first to examine the truth of any thing, and then to believe it; but, in your religion, ye first teach your children to believe without examination, and then perhaps one in an hundred examines the evidence on which his faith is founded! In God's name, let the principles of morality be inculcated; let not your religion be taught till reason can exert herself; and let not your enemies see that it is founded on a rock impregnable to infidelity, and fortified by reason, whose presence crumbles the faith of other sectaries into powder. Shew them that your religion can be taught in a manner far different from that of the grand lama of Thibet, the triple and yet single god of Hindostan, and the obscene deities of Malabar, and yet that it can be believed. Alas! that the christian religion, which is capable of confounding all sceptics who oppose it, should be taught and credited along with tales of seven-league boots and mountains of sugar candy!

Some who object to our arguments, say, what necessity for all men to become genuises?—Is it not sufficient that perfection be of a moral nature? By the state of society we have been advocating, it will be seen that all mankind would naturally possess what is called genius, and here the objection may be brought with peculiar force. But what is more likely to advance us in morality, than the study of the Deity with whom it is said we are hereafter to hold converse? And what can bet-

ter promote that study than the contemplation of his works, the proper understanding of which is the sole end of philosophy? When the philosopher feels his soul rise within him, as he investigates the wonders of creation; when the poet is fired by sensations which nature only can inspire; are these not proofs that man was made for enjoyment, and that he himself has been the cause of his own unhappiness? When men have been enabled, without prejudice, to seek and adopt the true religion; when they have given themselves up to enjoyments as comparatively endless as those of eternity, the catalogue of crimes with which every day renews our horrible acquaintance will be removed with the cause; gold will give place to a search after wealth which will excite no evil passions; universal peace will succeed perpetual war, and mankind will be deified, even before they are immortalized.

We must now conclude these observations, on what we consider to be a state of society more adapted to the dignity of man than the present. If they are thought, in general, too romantic, at least let the few observations on the advancement of human learning be attended to; and let me entreat tutors, parents, and guardians, if they wish the children under their care to produce any benefit to society, to educate them from the precepts of the most skilful in every thing they teach them; in every art or science they learn, let them be instructed in its rudiments from the works of the highest in its *practice*; thus, they will be enabled to erect, not a foolish Babel of brick and bitumen, but an intellectual edifice that will approach nearer in every age to the loftiest heaven of perfection.

“ *When not encumbered with a weight of evidence,*” &c. p. 40. This ought to have been, “when not encumbered with a weight of evidence as to its difficulty.” What one train of circumstances makes easy to one man, another train makes difficult

to another man. People of different countries, and at different periods, think pursuits difficult or easy, just as circumstances have made them. Difficulty, then, is entirely circumstantial; for as a man's mind is *circumstanced*, he is enabled to solve the most difficult problem in algebra, or he finds it an almost insurmountable task to explain the simplest proposition in Euclid. When the trains of circumstances can be investigated and traced from beginning to end, which we may be enabled to do when mankind live in situations a little more uniform, we shall know how to educate our children, so that much of the bug-bear, difficulty, will vanish from before their minds like a cloud from before the sun.

“ *There is considerable difference in the rapidity of receiving ideas, in the first few years after birth.*” p. 47. Besides the difference in common circumstances, there is thought to be a very great difference in the reception of ideas, from diseases.—Many diseases are considered hereditary, and, of course, it is said that a man may have in one sense his mind innate, for it is formed according to the operation of the disorder, whatever it may be, at the time when attention is first excited. The well-known founder of what is called the Brunonian system of medicine, is of opinion that there is no such thing as an hereditary disease.*

* “ A taint transmitted from parents to their offspring, and celebrated under the appellation of hereditary, is a mere tale, or there is nothing in the fundamental part of this doctrine. The sons of the rich who succeed to their father's estate, succeed also to his gout: those who are excluded from the estate, escape the disease also, unless they bring it on by their own conduct.—Nay, if there be but two diseases in the strict sense of the word, they must be either all, or none of them hereditary. This supposition makes the noxious powers superfluous, which have been proved to be every thing respecting disease;* and as it is therefore absurd, so the truth of the latter opinion must be admitted.” *The Elements of Medicine, by John Brown, M. D. Dr. Beddoes' edition, vol. 2, p. 245.*

“ Though Peter's father may have been affected with the gout, it does not follow that Peter must be affected; because, by a proper way of life, that is by

* See from p. 95, vol. 1, to p. 135, and other parts of the vol. for an account of these powers, which are plainly circumstantial.

Helvetius says, that it is even in the womb that the child “learns to distinguish between sickness and health.” This is the true state of the case. If the womb be capable of carrying an infection from the parent to the fœtus, then, inasmuch as the child *happened* to be born of an infected parent, and as that parent, or some one of her ancestors, *accidentally* caught the disease which is communicated, (for it could never be *in-born* or *innate* in the first instance) that effect of the disease upon the mind is entirely circumstantial. Nay, the effect of disease, if all mankind were infected in the womb, is only partial, for it injures the mind only so far as there is a slow circulation of circumstances, which, had they succeeded each other quicker, would have entirely prevented any mental injury.—We often see children, whose parents were dreadfully affected by disease, as sprightly as if no infection had been communicated; whilst children, whose parents have not been more violently affected, have been all their lives the victims of morbid melancholy.

“*What connexion can a hooked nose, or peculiar mouth, have with the future life of a person who is not yet determined in the path he is to pursue?*” p. 71. A person may have a face which seems to foretel a particular mode of life, or to point out a particular genius, and as soon as his features become fixed, a strong circumstance may completely overturn any conclusion a physiognomist might have drawn from his countenance. Thus,

adapting his excitement to his stamina, he may have learned to evade his father's disease.”

“If the same person who, from his own fault and improper management, has fallen into the disease, afterwards, by a contrary management and by taking good care of himself, prevents and removes the disease, as it has been lately discovered, what then is become of hereditary taint?”

“Lastly, if the gout is the same disease as dyspepsy, arises from the same noxious powers, and is removed by the same remedies; if the only symptom in which it can possibly be thought to differ, the inflammation, is only a slight part of the disease, depending upon the same original cause, and ready to yield to the same remedies, what signify distinctions about either, that do not apply to both?” p. 246.

we have often seen a benevolent man with the face of a villain, and a villain with the most engaging *contour*. The impressions that circumstances make upon a man's features, are according to the effect produced by the trains which have preceded them, and circumstances flow in so many thousand different channels, that physiognomy, even as a mode of knowing the mind at the moment, is an act impossible to be exercised with success in ninety-nine cases out of an hundred. A man may have a particularly benevolent face by performing all his life particularly benevolent actions, if no contrary current of circumstances have completely altered the appearance of his countenance. But particular actions are in different estimation in different countries, and the countenance appears to be regulated according to this estimation. Thus, if murder were considered as a benevolent action, and a man should murder an immense number of fellow creatures, his features, according as he was satisfied with himself, and his fellow countrymen were pleased with his conduct, would assume a most pleasing appearance. On the contrary, however, as murder is discouraged by society, the murderer gradually acquires a ferocity which is a necessary consequence of his enmity to that society which he has injured. If, in a country, the native inhabitants of which lived upon vegetables, there should reside a family which made the flesh of animals their food; the flesh-eaters would by degrees assume peculiar countenances, inasmuch as their living on any thing but vegetables was considered cruel or otherwise improper. The features of the face, as well as the features of the mind, acquire their form in society, though, as we have said, physiognomy can take no cognizance of the differences in different faces, for it is an act founded upon the erroneous supposition that one train of circumstances alone has taken effect.

If we look amongst portfolios of portraits, as I have before said, (note p. 228.) we shall find the human countenance rough

wherever society was rough ; wherever it was polished, the countenance was noble. Wherever there is a uniformity of face there is more uniformity of conduct, especially amongst savage nations, where one man may be drawn as a perfect picture of the human race. It is often said, that a shepherd can distinguish peculiarities in the countenance of every sheep in his flock which a common observer would overlook ; the shepherd might also remember the slightest possible peculiarity of circumstances which helped to form each countenance. The tigers, which come near well-peopled and guarded districts in India, are of a milder aspect than those which frequent wild jungles, which have countenances of ineffable ferocity.

Craniologists will find their system equally impossible with physiognomy, for if there are indentions in the head which betoken particular dispositions, then, as circumstances appear in the first instance to create the indentions, as soon as the latter are formed, other circumstances may entirely change the conduct ; and I could give the doctor several instances of men who were foolish enough to credit his system for a moment, who found by their heads that they had dispositions their minds had never so much as dreamt of.

We have unintentionally omitted in the text a few observations made on genius by persons who were well qualified to judge of its innateness. M. Buffon, in a conversation with Herault de Sechelles, said that genius was only a greater aptitude to patience than common. In works about genius, the cause is often put for the effect, and this is the case in this conversation. The great naturalist, considering genius to be a greater aptitude to patience, seemed to imply that genius, as it were, caused the patience. Now genius, if this saying were true, would be producing its own cause, for M. Buffon himself describes with delight the rising of each new idea which his pa-

tience gave him when he sat for fourteen hours together in his study. Thus his patience gradually enabled him to invent.

Dr. Burney says, in his history of music, “Metastasio laughs
“at all poetical inspiration, and makes a poem as mechanically
“as another would make a shoe, at what time he pleases, and
“without any other occasion than the want of it.”

“‘I know of no such thing as genius’, said Hogarth one day
“to Gilbert Cooper; ‘genius is nothing but labour and dili-
“gence.’”—*Biographical anecdotes of Hogarth, by Nichols and
Steevens, 4to. vol. 1, p. 140.*

We have quoted Mr Belsham as saying (p. 169) that true genius is often displayed in imitation. Mr Belsham had not well considered the subject, or he would have known that the genius of poetry, and frequently of painting, consist in imitations of nature; but then the invention of poets and painters is exercised to imitate nature in such a manner as to affect the reader or spectator with something like the feeling which was impressed upon themselves. We had before noticed this, though not with entire correctness, in the note to p. 171.

Among particular geniuses, I have only considered those for music, painting, and poetry, as the three more particularly connected with innateness. My readers will easily see that all other geniuses are circumstantial, by a careful examination, and an application of the principles I have laid down.

That all children have an inclination to poetry, which is, in fact, an inclination to the language of nature, I need only refer to parents to prove. They will all recollect some simple, but beautiful sayings, which their infants uttered, and which many, too many for the benefit of the children, have considered

as presaging something extraordinary, and extolled them as such.

Some of the characters which I have enumerated, may be considered as bearing evidence contrary to the effect of circumstances. In the life of Handel, for instance, I have related no circumstance which first influenced him to adopt the profession of music. I instanced him only to show the consequence of a tyrannical command against an accidental disposition, which by milder means might have been subdued.

In "the life and studies of Benjamin West," in which is related the circumstance of his early painting, which I have noticed, I find an *argument* which plainly discovers its author to be an innatist. He says, that the Swiss are not a poetical nation, though inhabiting scenes which are the cause of poetry in others. A man need only consider a moment to see the fallacy of this argument for innateness. Men by custom may be made to consider the least picturesque country as beautiful, and to regard the most beautiful with indifference. There have been poets in Switzerland, however, as often as circumstances directed them to books of poetry, or to write their feelings upon paper. Mr. Galt had got the notion into his head that is too common, that there are no poets who do not write. If he had not had this idea, he would have found the language of the Swiss peasants in many respects highly poetical. There are a people of whom we hear little but calumny, who have almost all, according to their circumstances, a peculiarly romantic and poetical cast of character and language—the Gipsies; the same singularity of expression and of speech characterizes them, from the common fortune-teller of Norwood to the tirauna of Madrid. It is not the country which causes disposition to any thing. It is the slightest possible circumstance that disposes the country, or any thing else, to have an uncommon effect upon the mind,

which pursues the path pointed out and leading to a singular train of ideas, of which the directing circumstance produces the first.

I must now conclude these additions to my essay. I leave them and the work to a tribunal which sooner or later must come to a true decision. I fear there is some repetition of arguments in several parts of the work, which, on such a subject, is almost inevitable. None can be more conscious of our liability to error than myself, but if I have removed one stone from the interest-raised wall which debars us of the sight and enjoyment of truth, the knowledge of having done so is a glorious compensation.

AN ENQUIRY

INTO THE

Nature of Ghosts,

AND OTHER APPEARANCES SUPPOSED TO BE
SUPERNATURAL.

“ ——— Ora modis ad tollens pallida miris,
“ Crudeles aras, trajectaque pectora ferro
“ Nudavit. ———” VIRG. *ÆN.*

“ Nonne, inquit, videtis illic immanem draconem, igneis armatum cornibus,
“ caudâ in circulum retortâ.” ERASMUS.



AN ENQUIRY INTO THE
NATURE OF GHOSTS, &c.

WHAT is a ghost?*. This is a question which it may be said every person is qualified to answer. We have asked it, however, in order that we may ourselves explain to our own satisfaction, and that of our readers, what is generally known by the word ghost, and why ghosts disturb the habitations of the living. Mr. Grose has given us the necessary explanation: “A ghost is supposed to be the

* It may be proper to mention, that, in the first instance, I have called the appearances of spirits—ghosts, as it is, in fact, the word which ought exclusively to be applied to them. As I might be liable to a charge of adopting a vulgar appellation, when I advance farther in the essay, I have used the word apparition as a synonym. The “ghost,” is plainly from the German *geist*, or Saxon *gaste* or *gest*. Guest is a word which is used to denominate an apparition, to this day, in the North of England.

“ spirit of a person deceased, who is either
“ commissioned to return for some especial
“ errand, such as the discovery of a murder ;
“ to procure restitution of lands or money
“ unjustly withheld from an orphan or wi-
“ dow ; or, having committed some injustice
“ whilst living, cannot rest till that is redres-
“ sed. Sometimes the occasion of spirits re-
“ visiting this world, is to inform their heir in
“ what secret place or private drawer in an
“ old trunk they had hid the title deeds of the
“ estate ; or where in troublesome times they
“ had buried the money and plate. Some
“ ghosts of murdered persons, whose bodies
“ have been secretly buried, cannot be at ease
“ till their bones have been taken up and de-
“ posited in consecrated ground, with all the
“ rites of christian burial.” There are some
more important purposes, however, to which
these beings are subservient. They have ap-
peared to foretel approaching dissolution,
and to warn and convince the unbelieving

sinner of a state of existence beyond the present. They have sometimes shewn themselves, to give notice of misfortunes of a temporary nature, in order that they might be avoided. But, by far the greater number have appeared for no other cause but that of terrifying rustics, of killing old women, and weakening the intellects of children.

That ghosts often exist only in imagination. The proofs of this are numerous.—Ghosts commonly appear at times when the mind is least prepared for a careful investigation of phenomena. When all the world is shut out, and a thousand images rush at once upon the solitary, without there being any power to arrange or to prevent them, where is the wonder that sometimes thoughts will become embodied? No man can think of any thing which is substantial, without having in his mind the form of that substance.—When I think of a man, I see a man with

“my mind’s eye;” the fact is so certain, that to mention it is almost unnecessary. When, then, a ghost is seen, it may in many instances be nothing more than the idea of the moment, placed more immediately in view of some of the senses, because it is stronger than common. When we are awakened from a dream, we frequently betray a partial ignorance of our situation; either we think that we see some part of our dream, or we are in some degree deceived as to the position of objects by which we are surrounded. Most of ghosts are plainly produced by vitiated perception, to which things appear different from what they are, or before which phantoms flit which have no real existence. This may be traced from the confined madman, to the man whose rational conversation gains credit to the appearances which a momentary privation of judgment had occasioned. The vitiated perception, which creates apparitions, is nothing more than the imagination throwing off

all control from the judgment, and suffering itself to be guided, or misguided, by every phantasy which its own waywardness produces.* Thus the mind loses all idea of distance in some situations, and the appearance, which is within itself, it supposes to be at some distance from it; so that men have often a power exercised upon their minds, embodying their perceptions at some place beyond them, almost like that power called ventriloquism, which deceives as to the position of sounds; but that one power is voluntary, and the other, except in some few cases, entirely involuntary.†

* “It is well known, that in certain diseases of the brain, such as delirium and insanity, spectral delusions take place even during the space of many days. But it has not been generally observed, that a partial affection of the brain may exist, which renders the patient liable to such imaginary impressions, either of sight or sound, without disordering his judgment or memory. From this peculiar condition of the sensorium, I conceive that the best supported stories of apparitions may be completely accounted for.”—*Ferriar on Apparitions*, p. 14. 15.

† What I have said here, may make me liable to the charge

Amongst the ghosts which the imagination has created, we may enumerate all those that have been seen, in a manner, exclusively; for, why, if a man's perception were not diseased, could he see and receive answers from a ghost, whilst bye-standers neither perceived any thing, nor heard any sound, but the questions, which to their ears were unanswered? To be seen, and to utter sounds, a ghost must be substantial, and what affects the senses of one man, must certainly, if it be external, affect the senses of all who are in the same situation, or nearly so, in point of distance or elevation. Thus, if a lighted candle be set at a particular distance from a large army, drawn out upon a plain, all the soldiers must inevitably see that candle, if to its flame their

of confounding ideas and images, and bring me into the endless and useless disputes about the form of our ideas. I have stated, however, what I conceive to be the fact; deeper metaphysicians may drown themselves in quibbles upon it, but, finally, they must come to the same conclusion.

eyes are directed without any obstruction; but, if one man from an hundred thousand men, of which number we will suppose that army to consist, should say that he saw the ghost of a deceased relation, though no other person perceived any thing, would not he be considered as suffering under a momentary insanity? Besides, if a ghost appeared for any beneficial or important purpose, would it not be much more satisfactory to have as many witnesses of its appearance as possible? If, however, a ghost appears neither for any purpose nor to any but one person, though others are present when it is *seen*, what is there that can prove it to be any thing but the effect of a disordered mind?

But the generality of ghosts are seen by persons who are alone, and at seasons when the imagination has most play, and the judgment least power. Their standard hour is midnight, when sleep holds dominion over the

greater part of mankind, and when the wisest, even if determined to be watchful, are liable to slumber away their philosophy. Many of the ghosts seen at the midnight hour, are undoubtedly “waking dreams,” as they are emphatically denominated. Some sudden overpowering influence sometimes so disengages us from our pursuits, that we imagine ourselves perhaps far distant from our real situation; or we suppose we are conversing with some friend, and seem to be just breaking off the conversation, when we are roused from our unconscious reverie. The slumber which is more general late at night than any other, is that from which a man awakes, even after he may have slept an hour or two, or some considerable time, without having been conscious of his having slept at all, except from the state of his candle or his fire, or the difference in the hour. The only question therefore is, whether it might not easily happen that a man having fallen asleep, dreamt

that he was in the room in which he really sate, and having seen in his dream an old and much respected friend, deceased, might not imagine that he had seen an apparition, and relate what had happened to him as such, after he had given it the fullest consideration? This might easily happen; and this appears to me to be the true cause of many of the apparitions with which the credulous have been too often troubled.

The circumstances attending midnight apparitions, if fairly considered, will, I think, confirm the opinion I have expressed. The falling of plates in the kitchen, or a dreadful crash of some kind, is frequently heard in haunted houses; but the most singular fact, which I have often had stated to me, is, that when one person hears the crash, not another person in the house is the least alarmed, though others must have certainly heard it, if it had ever taken place. Some few in-

stances I have heard related, in which crashes were heard by the whole family, but then the families in those instances were unfortunately so much bigotted to supernatural phenomena, that they never so much as sought for natural causes for the noises by which they were disturbed. I am persuaded there is no man who does not remember, some time in his life, being surprised as he was dropping asleep, by an involuntary jump, or sudden motion, as if he were falling down a precipice, and yet no man imagines that he is moved by any supernatural impulse. This has been attempted to be accounted for; but never yet has been explained to satisfaction. The same cause however, whatever it may be, appears to me to create these crashes, which are in the mind itself, and not commonly external.—These strange noises have from the creation preceded some kinds of midnight ghosts, only that they have altered with the times: they were wont in the days of our ancestors to be

sudden and tremendous rattlings of chains, or falling to pieces of armour; in modern *history*, however, they have been domesticated into a strife of dishes. It is observed, that in nocturnal visitations of the ghost kind, the candle generally burns blue, as a kind of announcement of the apparition. There was a time, when, instead of endeavouring to account for this from any rational cause, which most philosophers would have considered sacrilege, learned treatises would have been written to prove how the approach of a spirit, being the condensation of moisture from a dead body,* *naturally* caused the light to burn blue and dimly. I believe, however, it

* “Some are of the opinion, that *Ghosts* (by which I mean the Apparitions of Souls departed) do for the most part by virtue of their Formative *Plastic Power*, frame unto themselves the Vehicles in which they appear, out of the *Moisture* of their Bodies; this being a Matter that is believed more Congenial to them, and more Sympathetical; and for that Reason, they say, it is, that Ghosts do often appear in *Church-Yards*; and that they do not appear but *for some short time*, to wit, before the moisture is wholly dried up; as also, that the Ancients used to

will easily appear, that the candle's generally burning dimly before the ghost ventured into the presence of the person he was to terrify, was not occasioned by his being on his journey, but that in many cases the indistinct burning of the light caused the ghost-seer to conjure up shadows in the darkened part of his chamber, which would not have appeared had he been furnished with a consecrated, otherwise a thick and strong-burning candle.

There is another species of ghosts, though somewhat more uncommon than the last mentioned, which have the singular property of enlightening the place in which they appear, by a sulphurous vapour, or a kind of phosphoric preparation. Many which may be

Burn not to Burie the Dead ; for Cardan tells us, that during that Custom, there was no such Appearing of Ghosts as is now."—*An Essay upon Reason and the nature of Spirits, by Richard Burthogge, M. D. London, 1694.*

The ingenious author sets himself to controvert this opinion, as if the daring falsehood of Cardan were not a sufficient answer.

classed under this species, are explicable from the formation of ocular spectra. I remember a singular instance of this kind which happened to myself. In the middle of a very dark night I awoke in bed, and some association, which I cannot now recollect, brought to my mind some old man stirring his fire with a poker. Feeling my eyes about to close again to sleep at that moment, I mechanically opened them as a person does who is looking with great earnestness at any object, and to my surprise I saw, about a yard and a half from me, a complete representation of the old man stirring his fire. The fire was in a large square grate, and the light of it shone full upon the person. The whole scene was square, a circumstance which appears to me rather uncommon in such appearances, and altogether as if it had been enclosed in a picture frame, the limits were so well defined.—As well as I can recollect, it appeared about a foot and a half long, and a foot broad.—

Many might be tempted to consider this a kind of miniature apparition, which really existed beyond the eye; but I found it was not so; by accidentally moving my head downwards (for it was with my eyes directed towards the ceiling that it appeared), the consequence was, that the whole picture went in the same-direction, and, when my eyes were upon a level with the bed foot, all vanished. I mention the squareness of this vision not as extraordinary in itself, but because, with the exception of spectra formed by a window, it is the only thing of the kind which I ever recollect to have heard mentioned. I do not now remember having been in a room, whose section was furnished as that which I saw in miniature; nor could I call to mind a room of the particular kind which I saw, on my endeavouring at the time to find out its cause.

It appears to me, that this, and all the ghosts which have seemed to produce the

light by which they themselves were visible, though they may with propriety be denominated ocular spectra, can in no possible manner be classed amongst those appearances so called by Dr. Darwin. Ocular spectra generally so called, vanish a short time after the object which caused them is removed; these appearances, however, come at a time when their primary cause is entirely obliterated from the memory, or when the impressions which caused them to assume the shapes they bear, were not recognized by the mind on which they were made.

We shall, in the first place, consider the causes of the appearance of any thing unreal beyond the eye, and then proceed to examine whether there be any reason assignable for such appearances assuming their particular and extraordinary shapes.

The term hallucination has been given to

all apparitions which have their existence only in the imagination. M. Nicolai, the celebrated bookseller of Berlin, after he had been afflicted by a number of unfortunate accidents, became troubled with a violent vertigo, after the removal of which, and, as he considered, in consequence of the unsettled state of his mind, he saw for nearly two months an immense number of apparitions, with which he conversed, and who seemed to condole with him on his misfortunes. This is an extreme case. Though his eyes and his other senses were continually, for the time, liable to deception, yet he preserved his judgment so far as to know that it was merely his imagination which produced the spectres by which he was visited. That these appearances were in M. Nicolai's mind, and not external, can never be doubted; but how happened he to be surprised at what the disorder of his own frame occasioned? In this consists the whole deception. In the first place, a man who

sees a ghost is deprived of internal reflection, if I may so speak, and then he is astonished to see something before him of which he had no idea previous to its presenting itself.* And why had he no idea of it? The reason is plain. The thing itself which stands before him is his idea, and that a man expresses surprise at such an appearance, is no more singular than that a man should feel pleasure, which in fact is only a modification of surprise, when he is conscious of what he believes to be a thought before unknown. The reason why the appearance is beyond the eye, then, is, that for a certain period the

* The case of embodiment, if I might use such a word, which I have related, does not come under this class; and supposing that apparitions are ever classed under species and genera, this fact, that we have the idea of some apparitions before they appear, and that the idea and the apparition in other instances are for the time co-existent, will be a material line of distinction.

The account of M. Nicolai's apparitions is so well known, that I have not inserted it in the body of my essay. For the convenience of reference, however, I have added it in the appendix.

operations of nature are reversed; instead of the ideas being within the mind, they are embodied forth; the immediate manner in which this is effected we cannot discover, but it appears to be occasioned by any thing which materially affects what are called the finer feelings. Thus, when any one loses a dear friend or relative, what is more likely than, in the dark, to conjure up from the force of imagination the form so much regretted? It is by no means uncommon to hear of apparitions appearing just after a light has been extinguished. It will plainly appear that these are generally produced from the strong spectrum left by the light, greatly assisted by fancy.

But how happens it that apparitions take to themselves the shapes they bear? It is evidently the mind itself that occasions any peculiarity in the shape of apparitions. Thus, they always appear in garbs which are well

known to the person who sees them ;—because the mind could not conjure up things of which it knew nothing ; they generally agree in every respect with the seer's ideas of apparitions, from reasons already stated ; and as the mind is more subject to melancholy or to terror at the time, so there is more melancholy or terror in the circumstances of the appearance. I will venture to say, that apparitions of the dead would never appear in the present circumstances, if, instead of lamenting over a deceased person, a jovial banquet were held at his interment ; and that if he had had any chance of success, the fears and the evil genius of Brutus would have been alike absent on the evening before the battle of Philippi. But I fear I am entering upon a track too much beaten, to be either advantageous or entertaining to the reader ; and by thus commencing the subject, I may prevent many from accompanying me to the conclusion. I shall, therefore, now proceed to con-

sider some of the circumstances which create arguments against the supposition that supernatural apparitions are really unproved.

I. That apparitions have been seen at the precise period of the death of those whom they represented, as it were to announce what had happened. Many of these apparitions may, without doubt, be set down as singular coincidences with what was actually occurring. That many of them are in reality coincidences, is plainly proved by one general rule in relations of this kind, viz.: that they are not made public till after the death has been known to have taken place, and till every fact can be reconciled in order to add to the stories' credibility. The appearance is not much regarded till the ghost *seer* hears of the death of some person whom he knew, and then his imagination, suppressing every difference and exaggerating every resemblance, forces upon him the belief that he

saw deceased precisely at the time of his death, and dressed exactly in the same manner. There are very few men who have not more than one acquaintance: they, though they may not have any very peculiar form, are generally distinguishable from the rest of mankind. If, then, a man conjures up a spectrum, the probability is, that it will assume the form of some one with whom he is acquainted; and if all the world, whom he knew not, should die at the time of its appearance, he would not draw any connexion between them and the apparition, though the moment an acquaintance expires, he easily overlooks a slight variation in circumstance, and roundly asserts that he beheld his ghost. But no rule can be completely general, and this one has its exception. Some instances are on record, which bear *the appearance* of authenticity, and that is as much as can be expected of such relations, of persons who have noted down their having seen certain

apparitions at particular periods. But these instances are as one in a million, and ought, after all, to be considered as nothing more than coincidences, for several reasons.* A man who has been brought up in civilized society, as it is called, is generally thinking of his fellow-creatures, from the connexion which his situation in life, whatever it may be, has produced between him and them.—There is a well-known story of a captain and most of the crew of a vessel, seeing a person (the baker who used to supply the ship) run up a burning mountain, and rush into the crater. Sailors are not good judges of perspective, or good critics of appearances, by

* I have here only stated one of the reasons, when I mention that there are several. The others are—1. That apparitions in general are not of great importance. 2. That they do not appear always to warn of the same dangers, or to foretel the same events. 3. That we ought always to take the most probable explanation of any phenomenon, and these apparitions are most likely to have been shadows, detached portions of vapour, &c. These, and other reasons, will be fully investigated in the course of the essay.

which their imaginations are inflamed or overpowered, and though I shall not scruple to say that the appearance of Mr. Booty, the baker, was entirely a phantasy, yet it might happen that their minds were directed to him more particularly at the moment of the apparition. We are not, at least in such accounts of this apparition as I have seen, informed of the condition of the ship with regard to its provisions. They may have been entirely without biscuit, and then they would have cause to think of Mr. Booty. The captain called out, “Did not you see —— Booty go “to hell?” Most of the crew agreed that they saw the poor biscuit maker plunge himself into the volcano. Now, if we could find any thing which probably caused the appearance that attracted the attention of the crew of this vessel, so as to explain away the fact of the supernatural apparition, (and the man who thinks a moment on the subject, will no doubt discover ten thousand shadows, every

one of which may have produced it,) there is nothing supernatural in the story, but that most of a ship's crew should, *at the suggestion of their captain*, think of their baker, about the period when he expired! There is nothing supernatural in the story; the captain thought of Mr. Booty, from some cause which is not known, and instantaneously he called upon his crew to look at what he directed them into the propriety of considering a resemblance of their baker. How often has a man thought on another when he was dying, or after he was dead; there is nothing supernatural in these things; it is almost as probable as that one man should say what another is about to utter.

The apparitions under this head may, I think, be arranged under the following explanatory positions:—1. Either the stories of these ghosts have grown marvellous by coming through a number of hands, or, if not far

from the original *seer*,* he is dead, abroad, or some circumstance prevents him from appearing to testify to the truth of the relation.—

2. The identity of the ghost with the person, and the coincidence in time, are not discovered till it is found that about the period of the appearance some person expired, and then

the *seer* exclaims with astonishment, “I saw

“his ghost.” 3. The stories which, from

consistency, &c., carry with them the greatest

proofs of being true, have in reality the least

evidence of external existence. 4. These

stories generally, when traced to their origin,

depend upon the veracity or credulity of one

person. 5. As far back as we can trace, we

have accounts of persons appearing either at

the moment of their death or soon after, but

through all time we have scarcely one relation

throughout this essay I have made use of the word *seer*,

which is more commonly applied to a prophet, as signifying

the person to whom a ghost appears. The brevity and sim-

licity of the expression is a sufficient apology for its adoption.

indisputably proved. 6. That people have sometimes seen the apparitions of men whom they believed at the time of seeing them to be dying or dead; and, when they made enquiries and found that the persons they had seen were in perfect health, they have exclaimed, “I thought he must be dead, for I saw his ghost;” plainly shewing that the idea of that person’s death produced his ghost, or rather, that the idea of the death and the ghost were co-existent, and arising merely from the common notions of appearance at the time of decease.

II. The second kind of apparitions which may be adduced against their proceeding from the imagination, we may consider those which foretel the death of the person whom they represent, of those to whom they appear, or of others, their prophecies being generally strictly fulfilled. One of the Lords Lyttleton saw the ghost of a woman, which informed

him that he would die at a particular hour. The fulfilment of the prophecy, however, is not the least proof that the apparition was any thing but the creation of the mind, because in such cases the very dread of death will bring that fulfilment. It is a commonly received opinion, that people in general have some foreknowledge of their own dissolution, for they tell their friends by whom they are surrounded, that they are dying; but this arises from no supernatural spirit; it is only a plain inference drawn by a person in his senses, when he finds his body in a condition in which he never knew it to be before. When people were in a weak state on their death-beds, they have often imagined they saw a ghost, or an angel, come to announce their departure, which was nothing more than their own ideas of meeting at their entrance to another world, angels, or persons for whom they had had a great regard in this, perceived more forcibly than common, because the

judgment has then little controul over the senses. It is not at all improbable, that, besides that some apparitions, by the terror they produced, may have caused the dissolution they announced, the apparitions in many such cases may have been occasioned by such a state of the body as would in itself terminate in death (see appendix). Some persons are said to have seen and conversed with their own apparitions, which have assured them of the exact time they had to live, entered with the greatest *sang froid* into general conversation, and, after bidding the *seers* good morning or good afternoon, vanished with a bow or a farewell salutation, exactly in the manner of the original. This kind of ghost is a complete anomaly, for we cannot class it except amongst those of the imagination, since by no law of spiritual zoology could it be produced but from the mind of the *seer* it may be called an evil spirit, but it is not probable that an evil spirit, which is the title

given to most inexplicable ghosts by their most intimate acquaintances, would announce to a man his death, and enforce the necessity of preparation. One thing I am certain of, (and which would prove these ghosts to be entirely imaginary, if there were any person present when such an apparition showed itself,) the man who *saw* it would be found to be talking to *himself*. How any man can make the air a looking-glass, except mentally, requires a greater knowledge of the laws of apparitions than I can at present boast of possessing.

III. *Apparitions of sounds* which seem prophetic.*—As “apparition” is a word

* There are apparitions of all the senses, as well as those of sight, but as circumstances have thrown that one sense into more prominent situations than the others, those which proceed from it are most notorious. It may seem ridiculous, but I, nevertheless, cannot help referring my readers for an account of an apparition of *feeling* to the novel of “The Antiquary.” They will there find an infirm old woman in her dotage, twisting the air with her fingers, under the influence

commonly limited to objects of sight, this at first appears improper. As supernatural callings, however, are materially connected with our subject, and more particularly with this part of it, I shall take the liberty of saying a few words upon them. The most common calling is, by the voice of some person, with whom you are well acquainted, naming you, at the moment when you are least thinking of him. Most of the instances of this calling, however, are reducible to the same explanation as we gave of Mr Booty's ghost; all that is supernatural about them, is the thinking

of an idea that she has in her hands her distaff and spindle. I refer to this author, because I am confident that most of the minute conduct of his characters are from nature. We are frequently conscious of apparitions of taste when ill-health prevents the proper exercise of that sense. The reader will shortly come to some account of apparitions of *hearing*. Those of *smell* are as powerful as of any other sense. Dr. Darwin mentions a baron who was sick on passing a dead animal which lay by the road side, and passing the same way next year, he was sick from the very idea of the effluvia which he had before perceived. In this instance there must have been an imaginary effluvia nearly as strong as the original.

on some person at the very moment of his death, which is in fact nothing but a singular coincidence of the ideas with a particular situation of their object. When a man hears a voice calling him, he imagines, at the moment, that the transition from his ideas immediately before, to the idea of the person whose voice he supposes himself to have heard, is very sudden and surprising, whereas it is not at all surprising, as will be seen, after a careful examination. Supposing a sound to have struck my ear, I immediately endeavour to discover its cause; after some consideration, I cannot conceive it to be any thing but the voice of a friend: some time afterwards I hear that that friend died in the very hour in which I thought I heard his voice. Now, what could this be but a coincidence; it was not to inform me of my friend's death that the voice spoke, for I did not hear of his death till some time after the sound attracted my attention. If a real voice,

then there was a supernatural means employed without any supernatural or important consequence, which in all cases of apparition I consider to be a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*. I myself have frequently imagined I heard voices call me, but I never employed myself to find any remarkable connexion between them and particular events, and I think if there had really been any such connexion, it would have suggested itself to my imagination; if there had been any, I should, without doubt, have afterwards given credit to all kinds of supernatural informations.

If such callings and apparitions as we continually hear of did really exist beyond the mind, it is necessary to imagine that they existed by some law or general providential arrangement, that they should only appear in particular circumstances, and should always appear in like situations; i. e. if one man had made an agreement with a friend to appear

to him after death, and had afterwards appeared, another person who had made the like agreement should do the same; if a voice should inform one person that a relation was dead or dying, a voice should be heard by another person telling him of a relation under similar circumstances. This is no more than the usual regularity of nature,* but amongst ghosts and *supernatural* voices there is no regularity, and therefore I assert, they have no real existence.

IV. *Prophetic dreams*.—It is by no means uncommon to hear relations of dreams which have been most accurately prophetic of alarming or pleasing events, but more generally of

* Why expect the regularity of nature in *supernatural* cases? I have used the word *supernatural* heretofore as it is commonly used in the cases I have had to consider; but it is improper, because that which could not exist without nature must be natural. If there were any such word, an apparition ought to be called *supercommon*. Uncommon is too simple a word to express a superstition.

the former. These I make the fourth kind of apparitions which may be brought against the assertion that they are commonly imaginary; because, if dreams be supernaturally prophetic, there is something working beyond the imagination to produce them, and that same something may with equal probability produce before my eyes the ghost of a deceased relative, as it may represent him to me, whilst asleep, in the agonies of death, at the moment when he is dying. Prophetic dreams! many of my readers will exclaim, "I have had thousands." The question, however, is, were they really, and externally, and without connexion with former circumstances, prophetic? This question is soon decided. Does a man ever dream of any thing which he never knew before it was in his dream presented to his imagination? Many will say they have so dreamt. I remember hearing it said, that a lady enquired one morning if there was such a place or country

as Madagascar, for she had dreamt of it, but had never heard of it before. The fact is this: the recollection of particular transactions, and of things which have formerly happened to us, is frequently taken from us in our dreams, and after we have awakened, by a method as singular as that by which we often dream that we recollect facts and circumstances which, on awaking, we are convinced never did in reality occur to us. The mind, it is likewise well known, seizes upon circumstances, and lays them into its store, without its own knowledge, so that it often presents to itself, as new, what was procured from some other place by its own power of reception.*

* I cannot help again referring to "the Antiquary" for a most striking proof of what is a well known fact in Metaphysics. I mean the dream of Mr Lovel, in which a person shews him a motto of a book which he never to his recollection saw before, and which he could not understand, when it was plainly proved that he had really observed the motto and heard a conversation upon it, without his own knowledge. I have met with a simi-

It is impossible for a man to dream of any thing which never existed, and it is impossible for any person to dream of what does exist, or has existed, without his having previous knowledge of it. These are two rules which ought always to be remembered when we are considering the subject of dreams. The first will be found to be strictly true, notwithstanding the seeming contradiction in the dragons and monsters which sometimes present themselves; for these monsters are of a color which we have previously seen; they are covered with scales like those of fish; they have generally heads, eyes, noses, mouths, feet, &c. and are altogether things composed of our simple ideas, however distorted and mishapen in the concrete. The second I consider so self-evident, that I need not say

lar story in some author whose name I cannot now recollect; but I am sure my readers will pardon my again mentioning a book, the author of which must have deeply studied the human mind.

much upon it. Certainly it is often the case, that a man will dream of a road, and the next day he will travel over a road over which he never before travelled, and will say that that road was exactly the same with that of which he dreamt, though he never saw it before the moment in which he is expressing his astonishment at the coincidence. But though he has not before seen that particular road, he has seen many roads, some of which undoubtedly would so much resemble the particular part at which he is astonished, as to explain his dream in that prophetic circumstance. Though I dream that a relation is drowning, and shortly after hear that he was drowned; the seeing a person drowning was nothing new,—it is only the coincidence of the situation of the same person in the dream and in the reality at which I am surprised.—The question which requires a satisfactory answer then, is, why does a road present itself to me, which I see next day; why do I

dream of a relation drowning, and hear shortly afterwards that he is drowned?

There are laws of dreaming; it does not proceed by chance; and the laws, or rather law, I find so simple, that I am astonished that chance has ever been considered to have any thing to do with dreaming. When a man eats a particular food, or drinks a particular liquor, his ideas flow quicker or more sluggishly than common, and according as external circumstances affect him at the moment, the degree of the quick or slow succession is increased or diminished. We have, in dreams, a quick or slow succession of ideas, at such periods as to show that they, like our ideas when we are awake, are regulated by the state of the body. Inasmuch as there is a similarity in effects, we may argue a considerable similarity in causes.* The only im-

* I had intended to have made a sketch, in the body of this essay, of the most generally observed phenomena in dreaming,

portant question that presents itself here, as immediately connected with our subject, is,

but I feared I should be intruding too much upon the patience of my readers. I shall here, however, subjoin a brief outline of my ideas on the subject, noticing by the way some opinions of philosophers, who are allowed credit for their researches into the history of the human mind.

Dr. Hartley says, that dreams are the reveries of sleeping persons; that they are the consequences of strong impressions, often those of the preceding day; that they are occasioned by the state of the body; and lastly, by association. The latter he has foolishly considered a separate cause of dreams, when, and in fact, it is the great and only cause, though its peculiarities are formed by the state of the body and the circumstances into which the mind is thrown. The whole of our dreams must immediately result from particular associations; the only phenomena unexplained, are the causes of these associations. Of many associations we can immediately obtain the origin; but an explanation of the concatenations in the minds of particular persons, we can only procure by a constant observation of their lives. Mr Dugald Stewart mentions that a person dreamt of a volcano, and that his feet were scorched with lava, because of his having a bottle of hot water in reality applied to them: in the same passage, mention is made of a man who dreamt he was scalped by a party of Indians, because of his having a blister upon his head. If I were to add to these, that I have two or three friends who are what the world would call deep thinkers, who can dream almost whatever they wish, I may assert, without hazard of contradiction, that dreams and waking ideas are as nearly as possible similar in their recurrence; that they are in fact the same, except for the circum-

whether there is any thing remarkable in what are generally considered prophetic

stances of general distinction. Mr Hobbes says, that men, in the cold, dream of terrible objects, and when the heat is moderate, their dreams are pleasing. This is undoubtedly in general the truth, and it is nothing more than the effect of heat and cold upon the body, either sleeping or waking. Our associations in sleep are often most unexpected and most ridiculous. In fact, it appears to me that the strange conjunctions of objects in sleep, would have been frequently, if they had occurred to a waking person, what is called wit. We can sometimes trace the cause of these singular conjunctions. I myself remember, when very young, that I was dreadfully alarmed for some weeks, from some calvinistic books I had looked into, and from what I had heard, lest the devil should lay hold of me.—Whilst under this fear of the devil, I one day cut something with a pair of scissars, which I was afterwards chastised for cutting. The next night I dreamt that the devil came and presented me with a pair of scissars ! The whole of our dreams may be as well traced as our waking ideas. It is only because the former are stronger and come more forcibly upon the imagination, that they appear more wonderful. A theory of dreams might easily be formed by considering the causes of those of persons of the simplest life, and gradually proceeding to those accustomed to complex intellectual exertions. I would commence with animals, some of which are well known to dream, and which naturally dream only of their waking occupations.

Our dreams are in general much more distorted and incongruous than our waking thoughts;—this is asserted, and it appears true; but our waking thoughts would be just as unconnected and as distorted as in sleep, if they were not kept in

dreams besides the coincidences? I think it will be found that they are reducible to the same principles as common dreams, as far as dreams can be reducible. There are some, the cause of which is easily found, and some which are mysterious and have no discoverable origin; it is the same with common dreams which have no consequences, and are not remarkable for any coincidence. But there is one circumstance which will greatly detract from the wonderful appearance which these dreams frequently have to inconsiderate minds. They are not prophetic in general; they only present some transaction, which is afterwards found to have happened at the

order by the constant recurrence of our precise situation. At the moment I am writing this, the whole of my past life has flitted through my mind, and if I had not recalled myself, I might have *dreamt* that I was at Constantinople or at Petersburg. I do not believe it would be possible even for the most abstracted mathematician to avoid the wandering of his ideas at some period, and if he could prevent it constantly, I am firmly persuaded that he would not dream at all, or his dreams would be on mathematics only.

time of the presentation. These transactions are generally accidents, or circumstances which are not altogether uncommon in the present state of society; or, if they are not very common, they are such as may be considered likely to occur. A man may be thrown into such circumstances frequently recurring, as are likely sometimes to attract his attention, and then, if he dream about any such circumstances, superstitious people will say that the dream was prophetic of the next recurrence. The man himself, however, will be convinced that the dream was produced by one circumstance, and that there was nothing extraordinary in its being succeeded by another circumstance exactly similar. I happen to be one of those *prophetic* dreamers myself, and on the recurrence of the circumstance of which I dreamt, I sometimes exclaim with surprise, "I dreamt of it," exactly as I have related of some ghost *seers* who cry out, "I saw his ghost," when their own ima-

ginations form the coincidences at which they are astonished. As we are not astonished at dreaming of constantly recurring circumstances, so we have no need to be astonished at our dreams of circumstances, which, though not so frequently taking place, are by no means uncommon or improbable. We should not be surprised at our dreaming of occurrences within the common course of circumstances, even though we cannot trace in our minds any thing which could give rise to such dreams, because, since we know that the mind can mechanically seize circumstances without its own cognizance, we cannot conscientiously say that such dreams were not the result of such mechanical seizures or impressions. I remember dreaming one night, that the street into which my window opened was crowded with caravans, containing wild beasts. In the morning, I discovered that that dream had been caused by my seeing, the day before, a number of such caravans; but

I found my dream, a few hours after I had thus explained it, turn out to be a most miraculous prophecy, for, on going to my window, the street was actually crowded with caravans of the same color as those of which I dreamt! But it is the great singularity of coincidence in every circumstance that makes many dreams to be considered as prophetic. Suppose I should dream that my brother was drowned, and I should find, the next day, that he had actually perished in crossing a river at the moment of my dream. This is a case as strong in coincidences as can well be imagined. The coincidence in time is the most remarkable, supposing that I did not know what my brother was doing, or where he was; but it is altogether unusual to dream of any person of whose way of life, in general at least, we have not some knowledge. If I knew that I had a relation in a particular army in active service, I might by a common train of ideas think that he might be fighting,

or he might be killed, at the moment that he was presented to my mind, and shortly after I might have a letter informing me that he was fighting, or he was killed, at or near that precise period. In like manner, a train of ideas might run through my mind about my brother, when asleep, in such a case as I have above related. I might be thinking he might perhaps be in danger in crossing such a river, from the common anxiety which one person feels for another for whom he has any regard, (for it should be observed, that our dreams do not present to us any thing but our own pains and pleasures,) and then my hearing afterwards that he was drowned, being a confirmation of my dream, would no doubt astonish me. But I ought not to be astonished, for plainly the dream was nothing more than a confirmation of my own fears for my brother, which, by reason of the absence of other sensations, were presented to my imagination with the strength of reality.

Grotius, I think, mentions a person who was saved from being buried in the ruins of a house in which he slept, by a dream warning him to depart. This kind of dream, if we had any well-authenticated instances of it, is certainly prophetic, and most providentially so; but there are very few instances extant, and none have yet come to my knowledge, which are not capable of being completely explained. It is most probable that the soldier (which I believe the person was whom Grotius mentions) saw the state of the place in which he was, before he fell asleep, and that the warning was nothing but the modified suggestion of his own imagination. We are informed by Josephus, that Alexander, who had vowed vengeance against the Jews, had a singular dream, which turned aside his wrath, and that the High Priest met him, arrayed in his grandest habiliments, by the command of God, who had appeared to him in a vision. This story, however, has little

authority, and most probably, if the report was set abroad that the High Priest and Alexander had had these dreams, the whole was nothing more than a political contrivance for the interest of all parties.

In prophetic dreams, or in dreams connected with futurity, or with present circumstances, then, the coincidence is the only thing remarkable, and that is only so because we cannot always trace the cause of our dreams. But if we cannot always trace the cause of our dreaming about particular circumstances, we find as great difficulty, as Mr. Dugald Stewart truly observes, in finding the cause of our waking ideas; and we have just as great reason to wonder at the coincidence between the latter and particular transactions, as between circumstances and our dreams.

Dreams of warning, as of the death of relations, &c. often take very serious effect upon

the imagination, and are, I believe, by a majority, considered in some degree supernatural. That they are mere coincidences, when the person dreamt of dies at or shortly after the time of the dream, is evident, from many such dreams having occurred which had no accompanying or consequent event.

Apparitions by appointment.—There have been many appointments to appear after death if it were possible. Some have succeeded, but an immense number of such appointments have never been regarded. We are not informed whether the journey was too long for some of those who did not fulfil their engagements; but, as we have had both bad and good apparitions of this kind, the difference in situation could make no difference in the difficulty of appearing, and it is most probable that the apparitions existed only in the imaginations of those by whom they were perceived. It is well known, that every compact

of this kind which has been fulfilled, has been explained from natural causes; and, therefore, till we know an authenticated instance of an apparition of this kind, without the possibility of so explaining it, we shall refrain from dwelling longer upon this part of our subject.

Dr. Johnson.—There is a very well-known paragraph in *Rasselas*, which we shall here take the liberty of quoting, as we intend to make a few observations upon the great *argument* which it contains. When *Rasselas*, his sister, her favorite, and *Imlac*, are about to enter the great pyramid, the favorite starting back with horror at the gloomy entrance, mentioned her dread of apparitions; upon the prince's telling her to fear nothing, as the dead are seen no more, *Imlac* says, “ That the dead
“ are seen no more I will not undertake to
“ maintain, against the concurrent and unva-
“ ried testimony of all ages and of all nations.

“ There is no people, rude or learned,
“ among whom apparitions of the dead are
“ not related and believed. This opinion,
“ which perhaps prevails as far as human
“ nature is diffused, could become universal
“ only by its truth ; those that never heard of
“ one another, could not have agreed in a
“ tale which nothing but experience can
“ make credible. That it is doubted by sin-
“ gle cavillers, can very little weaken the ge-
“ neral evidence ; and some who deny it with
“ their tongues, confess it with their fears.” *

Dr. Johnson has by some been alleged to believe in apparitions to the full extent which this passage would sanction; and all who have asserted that he so believed, as well as many who have only considered the passage upon its own *excellence*, have contended from it for

* For two very sensible papers on apparitions, my readers may again look to Mr. Bigland's very deserving collection of essays, to which we have referred in our observations on the influence of circumstances on character.

the reality of apparitions. As Dr. Johnson's authority is often adduced for apparitions, it may not be amiss to quote a passage from his life by Boswell, which shows that the credit of that great man in such superstitions, bigotted as he was, was considerably limited.—

“Suppose I should think that I saw a form,
“and heard a voice cry, ‘Johnson, you are a
“very wicked fellow, and unless you repent
“you will certainly be punished,’ my own un-
“worthiness is so deeply impressed upon my
“mind, that I might imagine I thus saw and
“heard, and therefore I should not believe
“that an extraordinary communication had
“been made to me; *but if a form should ap-*
“*pear, and a voice should tell me that a par-*
“*ticular man had died at a particular place*
“*and a particular hour,* a fact which I had
“no apprehension of, nor any means of know-
“ing, and this fact with all its circumstances
“should afterwards be unquestionably proved,
“I should in that case be persuaded that I

“had supernatural intelligence imparted to
“me.” (See Boswell’s Life of Johnson, vol.
i. p. 385, octavo edit.) Considering all cir-
cumstances, my readers will pardon me if I as-
sert that Dr Johnson was not a believer in ap-
paritions at all, for he has stated a case for his
belief, which I am convinced never did and
never can exist. It would appear idle to enter
into an examination of the first quotation, were
we not certain that its *arguments* form the
great support of the belief in apparitions,
which is yet so extensive. It should be ob-
served, however, that the universal acknow-
ledgement of the existence of apparitions, is
nothing more than an universal acknowledge-
ment that there are certain appearances, what-
ever they may be. The kind of acknowledge-
ment is not the same with every man. I be-
lieve there is such a thing as the aurora bo-
realis ; but I do not believe, as my neighbour
may do, that the aurora borealis prophesies
battles, or represents the conflict of armies.—

So I believe that there are apparitions, but I do not believe that they are any other than deceptions on the senses. The universality of belief to prove any thing, must be shewn to exist respecting the supernatural reality of apparitions ; if such an universal belief be not shown, then is there nothing in the argument. To any man who considers this subject, it will appear very natural that there should be apparitions of the dead, wherever grief is manifested for the loss of departed friends, or from any of the powerful causes which we have already enumerated. There is no such extraordinary difference in the state of society in different parts of the world, as to prevent the existence of apparitions, and if they were not seen in any country in which there were circumstances adequate to their production, it would be much more wonderful than that now they are common among the superstitious of almost every clime. Universality of belief, if it did really exist, would not prove the rea-

lity of apparitions ;—all men may for a time believe error. All nations, I am persuaded, originally believed that the sun moved and the earth stood still ; the mahomeddan religion has more proselytes than the christian ; and yet the extensive belief neither of one nor the other could prove it to be true.*

Second sight may be adduced as an argument against the supposition that apparitions are not supernatural, inasmuch as it is the seeing of objects in situations in which they are afterwards placed. This faculty, how-

* Dr. Aikin, in the *Essay on Spectral Appearance*, in his letters to his son, has answered this assertion of Dr. Johnson about the universality of belief, by referring to Cicero de *Naturâ Deorum*, in which the veracity and divine origin of the Delphic oracle are proved by the same *arguments*. The Doctor ought to have seen, however, that the two cases were by no means parallel. The Delphic oracle had spread its fame far and wide ; but in whatever place it was famous, thither its reputation had been carried. Apparitions are believed in by nations whose common origin has long since been forgotten, and who had acquired that belief from the same customs produced by similar circumstances. The argument is good on the part of Dr. Johnson ; its application by Cicero is ridiculous.

ever, is so easily deduced from natural causes, sometimes assisted by the contrivances of impostors, that I do not think it at all of consequence, though I was at first disposed to consider some of its attendant phenomena as remarkable. Dr. Beattie has very reasonably concluded that such scenes as the highlands of Scotland present, joined with the effect of solitude upon the imagination, first produced the waking dreams of the future, called "second sight." He says, that such visions do not commonly intrude upon those who are more conversant with social life; but there is a reason why they do not so much disturb society, as they frequent situations nearly solitary, which he does not appear to have considered. When in mixed society, men are not only much engaged with the multiplicity of business which surrounds them, and of course prevented from thinking immediately on any thing but that; but circumstances most various and complex so rapidly succeed

each other, that it is almost impossible that any man can foresee events as he would have done in a more constant and uniform state of life. In the early periods of history, where any one stated time bears almost an exact resemblance in point of circumstances with any other stated time, when day after day and month after month pass by in the same routine, men are naturally led, in the first instance, to look forward to the repetition of similar events to those which have already taken place. Those who have most leisure will be tempted to prophesy the most frequently, till at length particular persons are likely to become soothsayers or seers to their particular districts or clans. Situation produces the particular effect upon the mind, of fancying prophetic apparitions; it is not any immediate gift to a peculiarly protected or peculiarly distressed people; the natives of the Alps and Pyrennees, and the inhabitants of every country, in like circumstances, per-

ceive the visions of second sight, as well as those of the highlands of Scotland.

Dr. Ferriar has not considered this subject. He has merely adduced two instances to prove what is proved by every instance of second sight of which I ever read or heard, "that the spectral impressions certainly take place." (Theory of Apparitions, p. 64.) The spectral impressions do certainly take place, but that they are only imaginary is clear, from their being visible to none but the *seer* himself. In the visions of second sight, upon a complete examination, there will be found nothing more remarkable than that certain persons, who have employed themselves nearly all their lives in that manner, have, as we said before of some cases of apparitions, drawn probable conclusions of futurity. The apparitions are only the productions of disordered imaginations, and that we hear nothing of all the instances of second

sight that have failed, will easily explain the many wonderful stories of the fulfilment of such visions. One instance of sight which proved unsuccessful, related by a believer in the faculty, will prove that it is not always infallible :—

“ But all such as profess that Skill are not
“ equally dexterous in it. For instance, two
“ of them were in Mr *Hector Mackenzi*
“ Minister of *Inverness* his Father’s House ;
“ the one a Gentleman, the other a common
“ Fellow ; and discoursing by the Fire-side,
“ the Fellow suddenly begins to weep and cry
“ out, alas ! such a Woman is either dead, or
“ presently expiring. The Gentlewoman lived
“ Five or Six Miles from the House and had
“ been some Days before in a Fever. The
“ Gentleman being somewhat better expert
“ in that Faculty, said, No, saith he, she’s
“ not dead ; nor will she die of this Disease.
“ O, saith the Fellow, do you not see her all

“ covered with her Winding sheet? Ay,
“ saith the Gentleman, I see her as well as
“ you; but do you not see her Linnen all
“ wet, which is her Sweat? She being pre-
“ sently cooling of the Fever.”*

My readers will judge for themselves whether it required the interference of a supernatural faculty for a man to know that a woman with whom he was acquainted, who lived only about five miles off, was ill of a fever, especially after she had been some days ailing. There were in this case, plainly, only two sides of the question. The woman would recover or she would die. Each man who had “second sight” took one side, and which way soever the fever ended, there would be what some would call a supernatural prediction!

* Miscellanies on Day Fatality; Ostenta; Ghosts; Corps Candles; Second Sight, &c. &c. by John Aubrey, p. 205.

In the book whence I have quoted the above instance, I find several queries on the subject of second sight, with their answers. The variation in answers to such queries, from persons who were well acquainted with the faculty, will show how little defined and how uncertain the information respecting it was, even upon the spot on which it was exercised.

Query 6.—“ If any Person or Persons truly
 “ Godly who may justly be presumed to be
 “ such, have been known to have had this
 “ Gift or Faculty?” Answer. “ Negatively,
 “ not any Godly, but such as are Vitious.”*
 There is another answer to the same question, which begins as follows: “ Sure it is, that
 “ the Persons that have a Sense of God and
 “ Religion, and may be presumed to be God-
 “ ly, are known to have this Faculty !”† To

* Miscellanies on Day Fatality, &c. by John Aubrey, p. 191.

† Do. p. 201.

a question, whether second sight is ever employed on the past or the present, one answers that it is exercised on futurity alone, and another replies that it is sometimes used with relation to past and present events!* In fact, I believe, on a strict investigation, there would be found as many kinds of second sight as there are persons who pretend to it, or as there are circumstances of difference in the fortunes or tempers of those persons.

Canhwyllan Cyrph, Corps Candles, are prophetic appearances believed in to this day in Wales, as well as in many parts of the north of England. They are thus described in a letter from a Mr. Davis to the superstitious Baxter, republished by Mr Aubrey: “Candles we call them, not that we see any thing besides the Light, but because that light doth as much resemble a Material

Miscellanies on Day Fatality, &c. by John Aubrey, p. 188 and 204.

“ Candle-light as Eggs do Eggs, saving that
“ in their Journey these Candles be *modo*
“ *apparentes, modo disparentes*, especially
“ when one comes near them.”* This is
proving that these candles are nothing more
than the common Will o’ the Wisp.

Upon the prophetic nature of these phosphoric lights I shall say little. I have hinted that most of the supernatural announcements of death depend entirely upon the supposition that that event is the greatest misfortune that can happen a man, and that is the case with these particular appearances. The candle might have appeared to the imagination of the *seer*, or it may have really been visible to several persons, but the prophecy is never, as far as I have read and enquired, of any thing

* *Miscellanies on Day Fatality, &c.* by John Aubrey, p. 176. I have before mentioned that in the Alps and Pyrennees the people possess second sight. This work gives instances of that power exercised at Delft, in South Wales, and in Spain by a set of people called *Saludadores*.

but very probable circumstances. If I were not afraid of insulting my readers, I might enter at very considerable length into a history of such lights, with their fulfilment; but I think the more sensible part of the world is so convinced of there being no connexion between the light and any subsequent event, that it would but occupy time unprofitably to proceed to demonstrate the folly of supposing any such connexion. Mankind forget their own meanness, when they imagine that they are under the particular protection of Providence, and such an idea has given rise, remotely or immediately, to every one of the superstitions we have been considering. As society becomes more extended and population increases, we hear of fewer apparitions of every description.* All that yet remain of

* Lord Kames notices Holland as having been very populous, and consequently freed from apparitions. Glanvil, however, mentions a Dutchman who had the faculty of seeing ghosts. He also says he had a fit after one which he saw.—Physicians have since discovered, that some fits are accompanied by apparitions.

these superstitions, and I am sorry to say they are by no means so far suppressed as might have been expected, proceed from the traditions of former times, and are most commonly taught with great diligence by many of those, of different denominations, who call themselves followers of Christ. If such men, whether catholic or protestant, dissenters or high church men, hope their religion will ever become general, they must unite to destroy such superstitions, and not connive at, or endeavour to continue their existence.—Such visions are, when properly considered, as abhorrent to human nature, as they are to sound philosophy; and the belief in them is the weakest conduct of the weakest intellects.

It will not detain the reader long, and it may be amusing to him, to trace the supposed progress of apparitions from the creation.* If

* In this part of my subject I have left much to the reader. I have said as much, however, as will enable him to convince

we imagine one of the principal members of the first family to die, we can scarcely form an adequate idea of the grief which would overwhelm those who first beheld the ravages of death. Is it not very natural, that, in the darkness of the night, some of that family would conjure some accidental spectrum into a resemblance of that person who had been taken away from them, by a change for the first time most horribly manifested upon him? Such an appearance must have taken place; it is the most probable consequence of the violent sensations which an early family would be unable to suppress. It is in vain that I am told of the want of feeling which must have subsisted amongst a people approaching to brutality. The very want of

himself. I have drawn out the plan of a chart of apparitions, which I cannot immediately complete, but which, if the public enable it so far to proceed, shall appear in a second edition of this work. It will show at one view the gradations of enthusiasm or insanity which produce apparitions in all their stages, from the most probable and rational to the most absurd.

civilization, considering the delicacy of man's senses, would rather increase than diminish the poignancy of the grief. The force of imagination would cause the apparition of the deceased, but there would not be discrimination enough to discover that it was merely imaginary. The first dead bodies would probably be kept unburied some time, under the hope that they were only asleep; but when it was found, from comparison and from the lapse of time, that they did not awake, the idea that such apparitions as the surviving had seen were not in the same condition as when living, and the knowledge that the bodies remained in the situation in which they were first placed, would produce the sensations of terror with which apparitions are generally beheld. Or, supposing that the first death caused considerable sorrow on the minds of those who remained, is it unnatural to imagine that the dead body, all pale and ghastly, should present itself to some of the

mourning family in sleep. The phenomena of dreams would not then even be guessed at; and what more natural than for an ignorant man to transform a forcible dream into reality? In the first ages, every motion of nature which attracted the attention of mankind would naturally be considered the work of some beings to whom the direction of her operations were assigned. To these beings they gave a resemblance to their own forms, and the sea was instantly peopled with Tritons and Nereids, which directed the machinery of the waves; Pan and the Satyrs inhabited the woods; and the lofty mountains produced ideas of beings of similar proportions. The superstitions of mortals have always proceeded from neglecting to examine the phenomena of nature. As they inhabited different regions, some evil dæmon sent down the winter's showers from inaccessible heights crowned with eternal snow; or, when the volcano broke forth, the thunderbolts were forging

which would afterwards strike terror to the nations. When in seasons of difficulty, or to add solemnity to the scene, the ceremonies of burial were performed by the light of the midnight torch, the *ignis fatuus* became superstition's torch-bearer to a funeral that was yet to come. The creaking of furniture gradually grew into an omen; and as, in a waking or sleeping reverie, grief had represented a friend of whom the *seer* had been recently deprived, anxiety pourtrayed the loss of those dear connexions which yet remained. After a country was freed from the rapacity of a desolating army, the dread of another drew out armed battalions in the heavens; though before, the *aurora borealis* had displayed its corruscations for ages almost unobserved, or only considered as the harmless contests of the *genii* of the air. The philosophic mind will need no assistance to enable it to trace the elves and goblins,* the faeries

* The rage of party is sometimes injurious to etymology.—Who would imagine that the elf and the goblin were ever de-

and monsters, which a more modern superstition has produced or modified; and that we are no longer visited by these aerial fantasies will prove, by a moment's consideration, that they were nothing but the deceptions of imperfect knowledge, and the effects of a bad state of society.

I need not mention the variation in *supernatural* appearances produced by climate, farther than I have already noticed them; every reader who can consider the subject for a moment, will allow that, when he has examined the history of supernatural appearances belonging to one nation, he has examined the supernatural history of the whole world, except for the operation of climate and other general circumstances.

rived from the Guelphs and Ghibellines, because the nurses of each party used to frighten the children with the name of the other!

I hope I may here be allowed to resume my observations upon the general belief in apparitions, by shortly commenting on the nature of the evidence by which they are supported. It happens with many human transactions, that a more impartial judgment is formed of them by posterity, than by those amongst whom they immediately take place. This generally arises from the disclosure of circumstances, which are at first concealed from interested motives. It has been said, that a man has a better view of a large city from a distant eminence, than when standing under its walls. But, however true, this is a poor illustration of the difference between the judgment of posterity and our contemporaries; and the fact is, that, in nine cases out of ten, posterity are worse judges of circumstances than those immediately present at their occurrence. Amongst those circumstances of which posterity are ill qualified to judge, are those relating to what have been considered

supernatural events. If the Cock-lane ghost had been undiscovered for one generation, it is most probable that it would have been handed down for several centuries as supernatural. If a performer of legerdemain can deceive an enlightened audience of two or three hundred persons present at his exhibitions, is it possible that any persons, from the distance of one day to that of two or three thousand years, can better explain the performance than those who were present at it? When I cannot believe a circumstance which is related to me to have happened at a distant part of the island in which I live, how is it possible that I can credit the relations of men, the exact amount of whose interest in what they described it is not in my power to estimate, and the whole circumstances of whose stories may have acquired a consistency from factitious corroborations? I may believe there was once such a city as Jerusalem, and that there is yet a portion of that city remain-

ing; but how far can I extend my credence to every occurrence recorded to have taken place there, when there are many circumstances that happened at Paris, even in the last war with France, on which I cannot arrive at an accurate conclusion? As far as relates to the common transactions of life, human evidence will convey to me considerable conviction; because the very fact that these are common transactions, will strengthen any particular belief respecting them which I may entertain; but surely supernatural events ought to have more than common evidence. I do not mean that evidence is wanting to prove that this or that man saw something which he called a ghost some hundred years ago, but that evidence is wanting to shew that that which he saw was really and *bona fide* a supernatural apparition, and not the consequence of a disordered mind, or a deception produced upon him by some interested persons. If I can prove, in one instance, that an apparition was not super-

natural, then, I say, I am not to believe that another was supernatural, because I cannot instantly explain it to have been otherwise.—The most probable as well as the most rational explanation to such an apparition, is, that it was not supernatural, but that there are some natural causes, which I cannot yet find out, by which it was produced, or that the reason why it will not come under any known *genus*, is, that some circumstances relating to it have been suppressed or exaggerated.

I find some apparitions to be the result of interested contrivances, and others to be explicable by natural philosophy; where, then, am I to draw the line? Who is to say, thus far you have deception of one kind or another; and farther, all apparitions are supernatural? Except for leading and isolated facts, which stand like guides to the navigators on the ocean of history, we can form no

correct judgment of past events. It is true, from certain actions being by constant practice coupled with certain motives, we may say that such an action proceeded from such a motive, but even so far we may be in error; and indeed in most cases we cannot judge of the motives, of the real causes, and of the precise relative nature of events, because we have no evidence that we have a knowledge of all the circumstances in those cases. How, then, can we judge of apparitions which have been seen at a very remote period, and the whole circumstances of whose appearance it is impossible we can ever know? The only way we have of judging of any thing past, is, by an accurate examination of what we may consider as nearly as possible parallel cases in our own times. If we find all these to be deceptions, we may safely consider all the ridiculous relations of which we read as most distorted and exaggerated, as Mr Mitford has well said, when speaking of the representation

of events to posterity, like the painted figures upon a church window thrown by the rays of the sun, in a thousand hideous disproportions, upon the pavement.

Whilst I am considering the general subject of apparitions, it may not be deemed improper that I should say a few words upon the proofs which scripture gives us of supernatural appearances. This part of the question has been thrown aside by a gentleman who might, I have no doubt, have done it full justice, without bringing any thing like discredit upon his *religious* sentiments.* As it is of importance to be considered, however,

* "If any thing contained in the ensuing pages could be construed into the most indirect reference to theological discussions, the manuscript would have been committed, without mercy, to the flames." *Ferriar on Apparitions, Preface.*

This gentleman has an enlightened mind, but dare not show it; I will venture to say he knows the bad effects of making supernatural agency a part of any religious creed, but he has unfortunately left his work incomplete, by omitting to notice the connexion between apparitions and religion. This con-

inasmuch as the fulfilments of visions in the Bible, and other supernatural events therein mentioned, are constantly adduced as proofs of the existence of apparitions, I shall feel it my duty not to pass it over in silence. It will be guessed, by what I have said above, that I am not disposed to lend any favorable ear to the supernatural events related in the Bible, which have any connexion with this essay. Had I been really convinced of the connexion between *visions of God* and apparitions of angels, and the sublime *moral* truths of christianity, I should certainly have committed to the flames all I had written on the subject; but, as it is, I hope *rational* readers will not be offended with me.

What the ideas of those men were, who
nexion I myself have not completely considered. I shall take an opportunity of stating it fully in the Chart of Apparitions which I have promised. Dr Ferriar says his essay applies only to prophane history. Is not all history *prophane* but that which is most obscure?

saw God in their dreams, I cannot pretend to determine ; but I cannot help thinking, that, if any man should in the present time attempt to ascribe limits to the Supreme Being, or to talk about God waving his arm, or moving his lips, he would be deemed by most of people a blasphemer. The *authenticity* of these visions may be easily gathered from the commands given when they took place ; on them I shall therefore content myself with observing, that my readers will form the best conclusions by referring to the Old Testament.—There are several prophetic dreams which are thought very wonderful. That of Pharoah, for instance, about the years of famine and the years of plenty. But where is the proof that these were fulfilled? Might not the dreams in general and their fulfilments be co-existent in the mind of the holy man from whose pen the history emanated in which they are related. Is there one single witness against such having been the case?

It is in vain that learned commentators tell us that society was far different from its present state when these visions and mysterious interferences were prevalent. We have testimony sufficient to facts, to inform us that society was the same as now, with the one single exception, the difference in civilization; and if we explain all the supernatural appearances of one age or nation to be deceptions, there is no reason why another age or nation should be excepted from that explanation. It is true, this nation and that nation say they are under the peculiar protection of Providence; this is the case with all nations at particular periods of their existence, but who will believe the accounts which they themselves give us of their protection, when they alone are witnesses to their own sacred covenant with Omnipotence?

There is one ghost story in the Old Testament which holds a predominance in the

mind over the others which are there related; that of Samuel's appearing at the call of the witch of Endor. In explaining this there can be no difficulty. It is plain, notwithstanding all that Mr Glanvil has said against some very learned gentlemen who chose to contradict the credibility of apparitions, that the witch brought nothing to the *sight* of Saul; a reading of the passage will convince any man that she only persuaded him that Samuel was present. The witch practised ventriloquism, and employed the voice which she thought would most astonish the superstitious monarch. "And he said unto her, what form is he of? And she said, an old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself." (1 Samuel, ch. xxviii. v. 14.) To every intelligent reader, it will plainly appear that in this transaction the witch was the only *seer*. Saul asked her

what the spirit was like that she saw, in order to be assured that it was Samuel, and when she told him how he was apparelled, he “perceived,” he recognized Samuel; he did not see him, but was conscious that he was present.* I shall not consider all the dreams and visions of Abraham, of Jacob, and of Moses, of Pharoah, of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar; they are only to be explained by

* “As to the appearance of *Samuel*, raised by the Witch, I despise it, as it is offered in the Capacity of a Soul, much more as the unembodied Soul of *Samuel*; which, tho’ it might have been caus’d to appear, as the Sovereign of all Spirits, with whom the Soul of *Samuel* is at rest, had thought fit; yet could no more be summon’d from that Rest, by the Conjunction of an old Witch, than the *Devil* could fetch it out of Heaven by Force. Nor was it likely that God, who refus’d so much as to speak to that abandon’d Prince, whom he had so righteously rejected, and that would answer him neither by *Urim* or by *Thummim*, that would neither hear his Prayer, or accept his Offering, would hear a Witch, a Creature likewise sentenced to Death by his own righteous law, and send *Samuel* at her Infernal Paw-wawing from Heaven, to tell Saul that to-morrow he should be cut in pieces by the *Philistines*: there seems to be no consistency at all in it, no, none at all.”

“*The Secrets of the Invisible World Disclos’d;*” by
Andrew Moreton. London 1738.

those who lived nearer to the period in which they occurred; nor shall I occupy my readers' attention by an examination of the apparitions of the New Testament. Of those I may be allowed to entertain my opinions; but my desire not to destroy the unanimity with which I am conscious my observations on apparitions will be received, as well as other prudential reasons, prevent me at present from detailing them.

After so many centuries of experience on this subject, we have never yet come to an accurate conclusion on the nature or substance of an apparition. Ossian has described ghosts to be of so thin a substance that the moon shone through them. This exactly corresponds with the best metaphysical definitions of spirit, viz. a finer kind of matter.—But how a deep and sepulchral voice can proceed from such a fine, transparent being, remains to be explained. All our information

on this subject is contradictory. One man says, when he was touched by an apparition, he felt it chilly cold; another says, when the apparition of his wife kissed him, her lips were warm; one person thrust his arm through a ghost, and felt no manner of substance; another lifted up the ghost of a woman from the ground, and it felt like a bag of feathers!—One ghost appears in a room without giving notice of his entrance, and vanishes through a stone wall with as much ease as a man would walk over a threshold; another opens and shuts doors after him, and behaves as civilly as any human visitor; one, in its progress goes through trees and bushes without apparent inconvenience; another turns out of the way, and goes past obstructions as mortals would do!

Their attributes and modes of appearance, as well as the intelligence they communicate, are as different as the minds of the persons

who see them. One ghost appears as he was when alive, and is not recognised as a ghost till he declares himself; another is clad in a kind of celestial uniform of dazzling white, and his auburn tresses are surrounded by a glory; one informs the *seer* that such a person is in hell; another says, he dares not disclose the secrets of his prison-house.* One vanishes in music, another in stench! But the most singular fact is, that most of apparitions, whatever were their religion on earth, seem quite contented with the same faith in heaven, and give themselves no trouble in informing the seer what creed he ought properly to profess. Who is there that does not instantly perceive that all apparitions properly so called are phantasies, “proceeding from “the heat-oppressed brain?”

Mankind through all time have been con-

* My readers will find such parts of particular stories as confirm these assertions, inserted in the Appendix.

stantly troubled with something which they could not explain; and when they could not immediately explain any thing, they have set it by itself, there to remain unresolved, like a surd root that stands unresolvable through the whole of an algebraic operation. Every thing they could not immediately call natural, they have called supernatural, and against most of those supernatural phenomena the door of philosophy has been shut for ages, entirely in consequence of their being designated by that appellation. Like catholic mysteries, they were beyond the pale of investigation; and the man who for a moment ventured upon their examination, was deemed guilty of sacrilege for overstepping *the bounds of human reason*.

There is one species of apparition to which we have hitherto given no exclusive consideration—supernatural knockings. These are in general imaginary. They need not be shown

to be so, when they occur in cities, and in places where there are a multitude of occupations carrying on; but there is one case which has sometimes excited considerable attention. I allude to the knockings which have been heard in mines, and particularly in the mines of Cornwall. They have been considered indicative of seams of metal in the directions in which they are heard, and I believe it has been pretty well ascertained that they have been heard in directions where no miners were employed! May it not have happened, however, that the sounds may be echoed from the instruments of some workmen in other directions, and that the metal, if there be metal in the direction in which the sound is heard, being the best conductor of sound in that place, the echo, or impression of the sound, is made upon that rather than upon another part of the mine? This is a part of the subject of apparitions which requires further investigation, for those sounds are by no means fanci-

ful, as I have been informed from men the least superstitious.

I shall not occupy the attention of my readers at any length upon that part of my subject which relates exclusively to deceptions of mankind against their fellow creatures; though wherever there is a ghost which operates in any degree for the immediate interest of any party, there is ground for suspicion that it has been invented for forwarding that interest. Priests and monarchs have at intervals, in all ages, had recourse to imitations of supernatural agency to sanction or complete their purposes, and men who have practised such deceptions for a considerable period, need not excite our wonder at the dexterity which they display in their performance. I am sorry to observe that the Roman catholics more than all others have employed such deceptions as have a final tendency to bring all *religion* into contempt; it is probable, indeed, that, from the specious ar-

guments made use of by the framers of their peculiar tenets, many of them were so far blinded as to conceive they had good grounds for all they did; though it cannot be denied that there is such a balance of obscurity and deception betwixt the catholic fathers, saints, &c. and those who immediately preceded them, that had not the one party existed before the other, it would have been almost impossible to draw a line of distinction. I am not willing, however, to enter into the dark and interminable regions of religious controversy; and, therefore, I leave it to my readers to judge of the extent of deception practised by priests of former times. We are not now under the control of the theocracies, which moderns are pleased to call heathen, and, therefore, we have been enabled to perceive exactly the tricks that were performed by the priests of ancient Rome and Athens. We know, too, what used to be the practice of the Egyptian priests; and we have authentic ac-

counts of the deceptions of the Hindoos, as well as of the northern nations whence we derive our existence. But whilst we are immediately under a cloud we cannot compare it with the surrounding sky; it is only when beyond it that we know exactly the gloom which has overshadowed us.*

Those appearances which are explicable by natural philosophy, in general assume a magnificence and grandeur not possessed by any of those which have already come under our

* This requires some little explanation, as at first it appears to be contradictory, in some degree, to what we have said before respecting the judgment of posterity. In the transactions of priests, we have, when they are contemporaries, no means of knowing how far deception may or may not be carried, nor have we any greater means of judging of transactions which have passed, except by the disclosure of certain actions, certain facts, which leave no rational doubt as to motives. The using of this metaphor of a cloud, in such a case, might be likely to mislead, from its resemblance to that respecting the distant view of a town, and the being under its walls, with the truth of which we did not agree, and this was my reason for stating precisely the nature of evidence by which we formed our opinions of priests of ancient times.

consideration. The deceptions performed by or consequent upon natural phenomena, are of two kinds; either they exist in the phenomena themselves, or they are produced by associations which the phenomena excite.—Those which are more immediately produced by association, are such as the corps-candles which we have already mentioned, where the appearance has no connexion whatever with the fate or business of mortals, except what the mind of superstition forms for it; those deceptions which exist in the phenomena themselves are generally remarkable for their grandeur, such as the Spectre of the Broken, and the fata Morgana which appears in the straits of Reggio. The latter is yet considered by the common people as a supernatural appearance raised by “the faery Morgana,” but it has been proved by men who have been eye witnesses of it, to be nothing but a multiplied reflexion from the houses, &c. in the neighbourhood (see Appendix).

Besides those we have already mentioned, there are other deceptions produced from associations, and particularly from mists, and uncommon positions of the sun behind clouds of a peculiar formation. The appearance of armies, not in the clouds but upon the same ground on which the *seers* themselves were standing, has been frequently related, and visionary troops have been sometimes so undeniably proved, that Kirchen, never attempting to weaken the evidence of the apparition itself, or to show that it was not strong enough for universal belief, has actually endeavoured to show that the armies which were seen marching, and which were likewise in many cases seen to vanish, were reflections from some other part of the earth to clouds of a particular form, and from them down again to the earth where they were seen! I have now before me an account of an army seen in 1812, which is somewhat singular from the circumstance that it tends to contradict any

solution which might be made from direct association. The army was clothed, one body of it in white and another in dark apparel, and only one person, the leader of the foremost body, was clad in scarlet. For a complete consideration of this relation, and for the story itself, I must refer my readers to the Appendix.

I remember reading an authenticated account of the appearance of a man with a flag in his hand, somewhat resembling that of America. This apparition was seen in the sun, not many years ago, from a ship at sea, and observed by many of the crew. In less enlightened times than those in which we live, this might have been considered as a prophecy relating to the United States, or to the Independents of South America. As it is, however, no man was foolish enough to connect it with any thing, and it is forgotten as if it had never taken place. This, as one instance

amongst many, is a sign of the greater degree of sense which prevails at present over any former period, for Aubrey relates some stories of phenomena in the sun, such as rainbows, rings, and even double suns, not in the least connected with mortals, which were considered as prognosticating events that were consequent on their appearance. The appearance of the sun we have mentioned, the Spectre of the Broken, the fata Morgana, and the deceptions of the sight in the deserts of Egypt and Arabia,* are, I think, all that we know at present of deceptions from natural phenomena, of such a kind that they equally operate upon the wise and the foolish, the credulous and the unbelieving; but we have not arrived at a complete knowledge of nature;

* The particular deception which takes place upon persons travelling through the deserts, viz. the appearance of a river, I am assured has been seen amongst the highlands of Scotland, and, by those who have been accustomed to see it, has been reckoned as no mean portion of the *supernatural* phenomena of the country.

and, if even the least credulous person should be persuaded that he had seen a supernatural apparition, we should not allow that it was so till we had investigated it in every possible manner, in order to prove that it proceeded from some natural cause not hitherto universally known.

With respect to apparitions of the other kind, such as arise from mists, aurora borealis, &c. which we consider as only deceptive so far as the powers of association tend to produce deception, I can only recommend, that each particular case which comes under the observation of an enlightened man, should be carefully investigated: from the very circumstance of the partial knowledge of any such apparition, it generally happens that all the wonder arises.

I have not dwelt, as many writers on the subject of apparitions have done before me,

upon the question of the possibility of a ghost making its appearance. The phrase, “Nothing is impossible with God,” is too commonly in the mouths of *ghost-seers* for them to pay the least regard to any attempt to convince them of their errors. It would no doubt be blasphemy for any man to say that any thing was impossible with the Deity, but the question would turn upon the limitations which the Deity puts upon himself with regard to mortals. That the Deity does limit his own powers, as far as concerns us, is evident, for his power is infinite, and an infinity of power can never be known by beings whose existence is merely periodical; the only question is upon the exact degree of the limitation, and, as far as regards the appearance of ghosts, we may fairly decide what may be, by what has been. We know nothing whatever of the nature of any world of spirits, and till we know that, it is not possible to judge of the capacity for appearing which any spirit may possess.

However I may differ in opinion from many who may be inclined to think with me, as far as relates to *prophane* history and more modern times, I am disposed in general to reject the possibility of any communication whatever between this and any other world. The evidence for such supernatural events, from whatever quarter it is produced, is most doubtful and inconclusive. I may have an omen, i. e. I may see a double sun, and the next day I may be in danger of my life, or an accident may be to me productive of the most beneficial consequences; but who taught me to believe that any phenomenon was prophetic of any good or evil fortune that befel me, any farther than because it preceded such good or evil fortune? I may find a great sum of money, and believe an apparition told me that that sum of money was in the place in which I found it; but how do I know that I had never the least natural intimation of any sum of money being buried there, when I do not

know my own mind? The phenomena of apparitions, taking all the stories together which are well authenticated, are explicable without any supernatural agency at all, and I can as little believe that a spirit could come from its own particular residence to disturb any inhabitant of our earth, as I can imagine it possible for a man to break through the line of our atmosphere, and to destroy the power of attraction which the rotatory motion of the earth causes to be exercised upon him, and to fly to the moon or the dog star. The one is equally possible to the Deity, and the “not impossible with God” disputants may just as well support the one position as the other.

But it is needless to argue upon the possibility or the probability of a ghost making its appearance, if, upon a complete examination of history, ancient or modern, we come to the conclusion that the interference of

supernatural means was entirely unnecessary. In most of cases there is not even the shadow of necessity, and where there is, it is not at all unlikely but the circumstances revealed or the line of conduct imposed, would have been brought to light, or pursued, in the natural course of events.

Let not any man, however, suppose that, because I deny the possibility of supernatural interference, I am endeavouring by any means to sap and undermine the foundation of true religion; on the contrary, I have postponed what I might have said, and what I indeed intended to have said in connexion more immediately with the Christian faith, till I can prove more completely to the world, by my practice, that what I have already written are my real sentiments, whithersoever they may lead. In the mean time, I hope that this essay will be considered as given to mankind with no insidious intention, but with the sin-

cerest wish for the eradication of prejudices, which nothing but repeated blows can destroy, and which may therefore be brought nearer to their fall even by my feeble efforts for their destruction.

Having now proceeded as far upon this subject as I originally proposed to myself, I shall in conclusion take a review of what I have said, that my readers may see the extent of my investigation. As many might expect some greater examination of particulars than I have deemed it necessary to make in the body of this essay, I have illustrated my positions by stating and considering a variety of cases in the Appendix.

I have set out with stating that ghosts have very frequently had existence only in the imagination. In support of this assertion, I have considered the circumstances under which apparitions generally show themselves,

viz. at midnight ; when the mind is least able to reason with itself, or to distinguish truth from fallacy ; to one person, when others are present and see nothing, and hear no voice but that of the seer ; for no important purpose, or without any determinate object. I have next considered all the kinds of apparitions which are likely to be brought forward as objections to my position ; those, for instance, which are generally considered as prophetic, or announcing circumstances which it is not probable should be known in the natural course of events ; these are—I. Such as announce death at the time when it is actually taking place ;—II. Such as foretel death, the *prophecy* being fulfilled shortly after it is made ;—III. Apparitions of sound, i. e. of voices crying out, it being afterwards found that the person whose voice was supposed to be heard, was dying at the time of the hearing, or something remarkable happening to him ;—and IV. Prophetic dreams. All these cases

we have endeavoured to show from various reasons are nothing but extraordinary coincidences, and these not extraordinary in themselves, but rendered so from want of consideration in those to whom, or near whom they have happened.

We have next endeavoured to show that what are considered the strongest cases of supernatural interference, viz. second sight, the appearance of corps candles, &c. are susceptible of explanation in a most satisfactory manner, and that they only appear wonderful, from the care of those by whom they have been practised or seen, to suppress every thing that would subtract from their supposed supernatural nature.

We have endeavoured to show how apparitions originated with the first men, and how they have gradually come into general belief, and, by a slight examination into the nature

of evidence in general, we have displayed the impropriety of suffering ideas of supernatural agency to possess any power on the mind, when we are almost without testimony of its existence, or at least without that quantity of proof which would be necessary to support the simplest relation in history, when, to establish itself in considerate minds, it ought to be proved by the most unquestionable witnesses.

We have afterward briefly noticed the evidence for apparitions which scripture contains, leaving out of present consideration those instances which prudential motives require to remain at present unexamined, and we have shewn that former times give us no greater evidence than the present on the subject of apparitions. Indeed, if we might be allowed to consider the times which scripture embraces as under the common influence of nature, we cannot but declare that there is the great-

est evidence for the apparitions, about which we have the best testimony, being deceptions. As we advance more into the light, we see the objects by which we are surrounded;—when in the dark, we think every tree a terrible apparition.

We have then shewn, from the partial and contradictory knowledge of the nature of apparitions, that there is great reason to discredit their existence entirely. After a few observations upon natural phenomena, by which men have been deceived into the belief in the existence of apparitions, we have concluded our subject by denying the possibility of their being permitted to shew themselves to mortals.

I may now be permitted, perhaps, by the candid, to hope that I have, even in this enlightened age, added one feeble effort to the mighty exertions which are making on every side for the removal of prejudices. It will be

a consolation that my blows for their overthrow have not been made in vain ; but, even if these two essays should be without immediate effect on the adamantine edifice of error, let me at least encourage the expectation that I have been the cause of others striking at it with success.

Perhaps it may be alleged against me, as a prejudice, that I do not allow that supernatural apparitions may discover themselves to mankind : Be that as it will, I am of opinion that a supernatural appearance in this world is impossible ; that the idea of its possibility is equal blasphemy against God and common sense ; it seems to imply that the arrangements of the Deity for the government of the world are not sufficient without the employment of some *extra journeymen* ! The folly of the belief will alone exculpate the irreverence of the idea.

In concluding this enquiry, I cannot do better than repeat an injunction to my readers, which I have somewhere before either stated or implied—When you see effects, do not forget that they have causes capable of being discovered in nature, and you will learn what philosophers never ought to lose sight of, that there is nothing supernatural.

APPENDIX.

I Shall here add two or three authenticated relations of apparitions, on which my readers may exercise their own judgments. The following is from Cumberland's Observer, vol. 3 :—

“ As I was turning over a parcel of old papers some time ago, I discovered an original letter from Mr. Caswell, the mathematician, to the learned Dr. Bentley, when he was living in Bishop Stillingfleet's family, inclosing an account of an apparition taken from the mouth of a clergyman who saw it: In this account there are some curious particulars, and I shall therefore copy the whole narrative without any omission, except of the name of the deceased person who is supposed to have *appeared*, for reasons that will be obvious.

“ ‘ To the Rev. Mr. Richard Bentley, at my Lord Bishop of Worcester's House in Park Street, in Westminster, London.

“ ‘ SIR,—When I was in London, April last, I fully intended to have waited upon you again, as I said, but a cold and lameness seized me next day; the cold took away my voice, and the other my power of walking, so I presently took coach for Oxford. I am much your debtor, and in particular for your good intentions in relation to Mr. D. though that, as it has proved, would not have turned to my advantage: However, I am obliged to you upon that and other accounts, and if I had oppor-

tunity to shew it, you should find how much I am your faithful servant.

“ ‘ I have sent you inclosed a relation of an apparition ; the story I have had from two persons, who each had it from the author, and yet their accounts somewhat varied, and passing through more mouths has varied much more ; therefore I got a friend to bring me to the author at a chamber, where I wrote it down from the author’s mouth ; after which I read it to him, and gave him another copy ; he said he could swear to the truth of it as far as he is concerned : He is the Curate of Warblington, Batchelour of Arts of Trinity College in Oxford, about six years standing in the University ; I hear no ill report of his behaviour here : He is now gone to his Curacy ; he has promised to send up the hands of the tenant and his man, who is a smith by trade, and the farmer’s men as far as they are concerned. Mr. Brereton, the Rector, would have him say nothing of the story, for that he can get no tenant, though he has offered the house for ten pounds a year less. Mr P. the former incumbent, whom the apparition represented, was a man of a very ill report, supposed to have got children of his maid, and to have murdered them ; but I advised the Curate to say nothing himself of the last part of P. but leave that to the Parishioners, who knew him. Those who knew this P. say he had exactly such a gown, and that he used to whistle.

“ ‘ Yours, J. CASWELL.

“ ‘ I desire you not to suffer any copy of this to be taken, lest some Mercury news-teller should print it, till the Curate has sent up the testimony of others and self.

“ ‘ H. H. Dec. 15, 1695.

“ ‘ NARRATIVE.

“ ‘ At Warblington, near Havant in Hampshire, within six miles of Portsmouth, in the Parsonage-house dwelt Thomas Perce the tenant, with his wife and a child, a man servant Thomas and a maid servant. About the beginning of

August, Anno 1695, on a Monday, about nine or ten at night, all being gone to bed, except the maid with the child, the maid being in the kitchen, and having raked up the fire, took a candle in one hand, and the child in the other arm, and turning about saw one in a black gown walking through the room, and thence out of the door into the orchard: Upon this the maid, hasting up stairs, having recovered but two steps, cried out; on which the master and mistress ran down, found the candle in her hand, she grasping the child about its neck with the other arm: She told them the reason of her crying out; she would not that night tarry in the house, but removed to another belonging to one Henry Salter, farmer; where she cried out all the night from the terror she was in, and she could not be persuaded to go any more to the house upon any terms.

“ ‘ On the morrow, (i. e. Tuesday) the tenant’s wife came to me, lodging then at Havant, to desire my advice, and have consult with some friends about it; I told her I thought it was a flam, and that they had a mind to abuse Mr Brereton the Rector, whose house it was; she desired me to come up; I told her I would come up and sit up or lie there, as she pleased; for then as to all stories of ghosts and apparitions I was an infidel: I went thither and sate up the Tuesday night with the tenant and his man servant: About twelve or one o’clock I searched all the rooms in the house to see if any body were hid there to impose upon me: At last we came into a lumber room, there I smiling told the tenant that was with me, that I would call for the apparition, if there was any, and oblige him to come. The tenant then seemed to be afraid, but I told him I would defend him from harm! and then I repeated “ *Barbara, celarent Darii,*” &c. jestingly; on this the tenant’s countenance changed, so that he was ready to drop down with fear. Then I told him I perceived he was afraid, and I would prevent its coming, and repeated “ *Baralipton,*” &c. then he recovered his

spirits pretty well, and we left the room and went down into the kitchen, where we were before, and sate up there the remaining part of the night, and had no manner of disturbance.

Thursday night the tenant and I lay together in one room and the man in another room, and he saw something walk along in a black gown, and place itself against a window, and there stood for some time, and then walked off. Friday morning the man relating this, I asked him why he did not call me, and I told him I thought that was a trick or flam; he told me the reason why he did not call me was, that he was not able to speak or move. Friday night we lay as before, and Saturday night, and had no disturbance either of the nights.

“ ‘ Sunday night I lay by myself in one room, (not that where the man saw the apparition) and the tenant and his man in one bed in another room; and betwixt twelve and two the man heard something walk in their room at the bed’s foot, and whistling very well; at last it came to the bed’s side, drew the curtain and looked on them; after some time, it moved off; then the man called to me, desired me to come, for that there was something in the room went about whistling; I asked him whether he had any light or could strike one; he told me no; then I leapt out of bed, and, not staying to put on my clothes, went out of my room and along a gallery to the door, which I found locked or bolted; I desired him to unlock the door, for that I could not get in; then he got out of bed and opened the door, which was near, and went immediately to bed again. I went in three or four steps, and it being a moonshine night, I saw the apparition move from the bedside, and clap up against the wall that divided their room and mine: I went and stood directly against it, within my arm’s length of it, and asked it in the name of God! what it was that made it come disturbing of us; I stood some time expecting an answer, and receiving none, and thinking it might be some fellow hid in the room to frighten me, *I put out my arm to feel it, and my hand seemingly*

went through the body of it, and felt no manner of substance till it came to the wall; then I drew back my hand, and still it was in the same place. Till now I had not the least fear, and even now had very little: Then I adjured it to tell me what it was: When I had said these words, it, keeping its back against the wall, moved gently along towards the door: I followed it, and it, going out of the door, turned its back toward me; it went a little along the gallery; I followed it a little into the gallery, and it disappeared, where there was no corner for it to turn, and before it came to the end of the gallery, where was the stairs. Then I found myself very cold from my feet as high as my middle, though I was not in great fear; I went into the bed betwixt the tenant and his man, and they complained of my being exceedingly cold. The tenant's man leaned over his master in the bed, and saw me stretch out my hand towards the apparition, and heard me speak the words; the tenant also heard the words. The apparition seemed to have a morning gown of a darkish colour, no hat nor cap, short black hair, a thin meagre visage of a pale swarthy colour, seemed to be of about forty-five or fifty years old, the eyes half shut, the arms hanging down; the hands visible beneath the sleeve, of a middle stature. I related this description to Mr. John Lardner, Rector of Havant, and to Major Battin of Langstone in Havant Parish; they both said the description agreed very well to Mr P. a former rector of the place, who has been dead above 20 years: Upon this the tenant and his wife left the house, which has remained void since.

“ ‘ The Monday after last Michaelmas-day, a man of Chodson in Warwickshire having been at Havant fair, passed by the aforesaid parsonage house about nine or ten at night, and saw a light in most of the rooms of the house; his pathway being close by the house, he, wondering at the light, looked into the kitchen window, and saw only a light, but turning himself to go away, he saw the appearance of a man in a long gown; he

made haste away; the apparition followed him over a piece of glebe land of several acres, to a lane, which he crossed, and over a little meadow, then over another lane to some pales, which belong to farmer Henry Salter, my landlord, near a barn, in which were some of the farmer's men and some others: This man went into the barn, told them how he was frightened and followed from the parsonage house by an apparition, which they might see standing against the pales, if they went out; they went out, and saw it scratch against the pales, and make a hideous noise; it stood there some time and then disappeared; their description agreed with what I saw. This last account I had from the man himself, whom it followed, and also from the farmer's men.

“ ‘ THO. WILKINS, Curate of W.

“ ‘ Dec. 11, 1695, Oxon.’ ”

As I said, when I commenced this relation, I shall not comment upon it myself, but leave it to the judgment of my readers, after giving them a short general explanation. It is worthy of notice, that this being one of the most authenticated ghosts we can have, is entirely without consequences. Mr. Caswell gives his testimony to the respectability of the narrator, and as far, therefore, as the seer himself goes, the story is as well authenticated as it could be. But the “hands,” as he calls them, of the tenant and his man, and of the other persons who saw the ghost, which he promises

to send up as further evidence of what he relates, are no where given. The communicator of the story might have found them amongst the papers where he discovered it, but as they are not mentioned, we may fairly conclude either that the deception in the apparition was discovered, or that the tenant and his man were too conscience-stricken to put their signatures to a relation of falsehoods.— There are various grounds for suspicion respecting this ghost:—the curate saw nothing whilst he slept with the farmer; but the man, who slept in another room, *said* he saw something, but could not move from fear. When, however, the man and the farmer lay together, and the curate in another room, the man called out and informed Mr. Wilkins that the ghost was walking about the floor, &c. and when he came to open the curate the door, and when the ceremony of questioning the ghost was performing, he did not appear to display the least apprehension. Mr. Wilkins

did not hear the ghost whistle, though it had done so; and if it had whistled at all, surely he might have heard it from one room to another. Now what possibility was there of deception in this case? In answer to such a question, I shall state how the ghost might be contrived. A little boy might be instructed to carry a stick, upon which might be fixed an artificial head, and a gown with hands or gloves to it, so contrived as to bear the appearance of a body. In support of this explanation, we have it said that the eyes were half shut, and the arms hanging down, and there is no evidence of any motion whatever, but that of the whole body. The words that it clapped "up against the wall," give a reader the idea of a boy running against a wall with some tall thing which he carries. Mr. Wilkins, when he went towards the apparition, did not press his whole body against it, but just felt it by thrusting his arm against it, or, as he says, through it, and he might without

doubt feel the wall through the gown, and be much astonished, especially if he did not happen to encounter any of the sticks or wires of the contrivance. As a further proof that the thing was corporeal, we have it walking out at the door and along the passage, with its face forward. It may easily be supposed that there might be some bye-door in the passage where it disappeared, or, if not, that the boy would contrive to let down the ghost so that it would seem to vanish, in a place where there could be very little light. Into all the motives of this apparition, we have not facts enough to enable us to enquire. I have taken into account only what was related to have been seen by Mr. Wilkins, because I think the tenant and his family to have been parties to the contrivance, and therefore they might have related what they thought proper of the apparition. The other appearance of this ghost to a man whom it followed, happened at night, and the same contrivance for vanish-

ing, &c. would no doubt be resorted to, as it might indeed, in a doubtful light, be employed with success. How a thing through which a man's arm could penetrate, could make a hideous noise and scratch against the pales, cannot be explained but by the assistance of something more corporeal than the part which Mr. Wilkins touched. This explanation will, I hope, satisfy all unprejudiced readers, as to the apparition generally: it is impossible to enter farther into particulars, unless we were acquainted with facts, a statement of which there is no means of obtaining; nor indeed would there be much advantage from them, if obtained.

I shall now relate two stories of apparitions which I have from the *seers* themselves. The names of the parties I am not at present permitted to disclose.

Miss —, at the age of seven years, being in a field not far from her father's house, in the parish of Kirklington, in the

county of Cumberland, saw, what she thought, her father in the field at the very time when, on enquiry, he was in bed, and had not been removed for a considerable period. There were in the field, and near her at the time when she saw the apparition, George Little, a man in her father's employment, and John —, his fellow servant. One of these cried out to her, "—, go to your father." She turned round, and on her again looking towards the spot where she had supposed her father was standing, the figure had disappeared. On her returning home, she asked—"Where is my father?" Her mother was surprised at her asking, thinking that every body in the family knew of his illness sufficiently to preclude such a question, and replied—"in bed, child;" where it seemed he had been for some time before.

Miss —, sister to the above lady, saw the lady of the house at which she was staying, in Bruton-street, Berkeley-square, when, on enquiry, she found she could not naturally have been where she had been to all appearance visible. She was seen in her house at Bruton-street, at eleven o'clock on a particular evening, when, on examination, she was at Paddington, and did not return to town till the next morning.

These apparitions I leave to the reader for his own contemplation. In the former case the apparition was witnessed by three persons, and was not known to have been supernatural, till they discovered it to be *impossible* that it could have been any thing but an apparition :

in the latter, the *seer* was one grown up and sensible person, and the apparition was seen under such circumstances as, in her mind, precluded the possibility of explanation, except by allowing the existence of apparitions. The veracity of the narrators in these instances I cannot dispute; but when we all know that while a person is thinking frequently of an absent or deceased friend, the least occurrence will occasion an allusion in the sense of vision, it is impossible to doubt that a more complete investigation into minute circumstances would have cleared up these apparent mysteries. In the latter case in particular, a close enquiry would unquestionably have explained the *ghost*, by finding that it was necessary for the lady to be understood to have gone to Paddington, at the same time that some important affair required her to remain in London.

Ghost stories from the mouth of the *seer*

are not uncommon even in the present enlightened state of society, and I have only related these in order to show, from the clearness of explanation which most of my readers will easily discover, what a very slight examination of circumstances it requires to destroy supernatural existence. If mankind will only step boldly forward, the deluding shadows will vanish with the fears that created them.

*“ When we are awakened from a dream,
“ we frequently betray a partial ignorance
“ of our situation,” &c. “ we are in some de-
“ gree deceived as to the position of objects
“ by which we are surrounded.”* p. 340. I suppose few of my readers are ignorant of the ghost which appeared to Mr Schmidt, a mathematical teacher at or near Naumburgh.—The story has found its way into many common publications; but, for the sake of illustration, I shall briefly restate the particulars:

F f

When Mr. S. awoke one morning, he beheld a monk at the foot of his bed. He examined him narrowly. The folds of the surplice were distinct. The school in which he lived had been a cloister; and monks had been buried in the neighbourhood. He raised himself so as to see the bed foot; the apparition retreated, and was at once metamorphosed into the gothic window of the room. The arches on each side formed the shoulders; the smaller one in the centre, the head; the window curtains, the surplice. From some cause, the eye viewed the window as at the distance of six feet instead of twelve, within the same angle, and of course the whole in appearance would not be a great deal larger at that distance than a tolerably sized man.

If this apparition had happened to a superstitious person, what would have been the consequence? He would have most probably determined never to sleep more in that room or in that house; and had Mr. Schmidt been such a man, another “false creation” would have been added to the numbers with which we are daily and hourly encumbered.—In addition to this I may add, that when I have been awakened on a sunny morning, and more especially after I have been dreaming in my sleep, I have seen the window of my room

in an uncommon position ; sometimes on one side of the room, and sometimes nearer the centre, its real situation ; this has been occasioned by the rays of the sun darting obliquely into my room, and perhaps, as Mr Schmidt's apparition was, by my eyes being able to perform their functions better, though with less judgment than common. Every body will be able to recollect some instance of vitiated perception, such as these I have related, which has happened to himself ; but when any man sees a ghost, he forgets that he may be deceived. The reason is, the doctrine of ghosts has been generally established ; and generally established doctrines maintain themselves amongst mankind, however irrational and ridiculous ; so that in time, vitiated perception may become the mode, or may be overlooked, or considered as the height of human reason, whilst what is really reason may be looked upon as vitiated perception. When a system is supported by one man or by three, it is ab-

surd, it is fanaticism; when ten thousand embrace it, it is excellent, and becomes religion. Socrates was an *atheist* when he hinted at the divine unity, and wished to teach the immortality of the soul; now *he* is an atheist, or guilty of blasphemy, who would have a belief in those things to be thought folly.—It will be observed, that, in the text, I have said “when we are awakened from a “dream,” &c. I have so stated it, rather than “from sleep,” because when a man is awakened from a dream, he does not immediately recover his recollection so well as from a sound sleep, when he is not conscious of having slept.

I shall proceed now to lay before my readers M. Nicolai's statement of apparitions, as I promised in p. 353; after which I shall submit what observations they have suggested, when compared with apparitions of other descriptions.

After stating that consequent to his having been cured of a vertigo, he was occupied by business which required great exertions, he proceeds :—

“ I had, in January and February of the year 1791, the additional misfortune to experience several extremely unpleasant circumstances, which were followed on the 24th February by a most violent altercation. My wife and another person came into my apartment in the morning, in order to console me, but I was too much agitated by a series of incidents, which had most powerfully affected my moral feeling, to be capable of attending to them; on a sudden I perceived, at about the distance of ten steps, a form like that of a deceased person; I pointed at it, asking my wife if she did not see it. It was but natural that she should not see any thing; my question, therefore, alarmed her very much, and she sent immediately for a physician. The phantasm continued about eight minutes. I grew at length more calm, and being extremely exhausted, fell into a restless sleep, which lasted about half an hour. The physician ascribed the apparition to a violent mental emotion, and hoped that there would be no return; but the violent agitation of my mind had in some way disordered my nerves, and produced farther consequences, which deserve a more minute description. At four in the afternoon the form which I had seen in the morning re-appeared. I was by myself when this happened, and being rather uneasy at the incident, went to my wife's apartment; but there likewise I was prevented by the apparition, which however at intervals disappeared, and always presented itself in a standing posture. About six o'clock there appeared also several walking figures, which had no connexion with the first. I cannot assign any other cause of all this, than a continued rumination on the vexations I had suffered, which, though calmer, I could not forget, and the consequences of which I meditated to counteract. These meditations occupied my mind three hours after dinner, just when my digestion com-

menced. I consoled myself at last with respect to the disagreeable incident which had occasioned the first apparition, but the phantasms continued to increase and change in the most singular manner, though I had taken the proper medicine, and found myself perfectly well. As when the first terror was over, I beheld the phantasms with great emotion; taking them for what they really were, remarkable consequences of an indisposition, I endeavoured to collect myself as much as possible, that I might preserve a clear consciousness of the changes which should take place within myself. I observed these phantasms very closely, and frequently reflected on my antecedent thoughts, to discover, if possible, by means of what association of ideas exactly these forms presented themselves to my imagination. I thought at times I had found a clue, but taking the whole together, I could not make out any natural connexion between the occupations of my mind, my occupations, my regular thoughts, and the multifarious forms which now appeared to me, and now again disappeared. After repeated and close observations, and calm examination, I was unable to form any conclusion relative to the origin and continuation of the different phantasms which presented themselves to me. All that I could infer was, that my nervous system was in such an irregular state, that such phantasms would appear to me as if I actually saw and heard them; that these illusions were not modified by any known laws of reason, imagination, or the common association of ideas, and that probably other people who may have had similar apparitions were exactly in the same predicament. The origin of the individual forms which appeared to me, was undoubtedly founded on the nature of my mind, but the manner in which it was thus affected, will probably remain for ever as inscrutable as the origin of thought and reflection. After the first day, the form of the deceased person no more appeared, but in its place there appeared many other phantasms, sometimes representing acquaintances, but mostly strangers;

those whom I knew were composed of living and deceased persons, but the number of the latter was comparatively small. I observed the persons with whom I daily conversed did not appear as phantasms, these representing chiefly persons who lived at some distance from me. I attempted to produce at pleasure phantasms of persons whom I knew, by intensely reflecting on their countenance, shape, &c. but distinctly as I called to my lively imagination the respective shades of three of these persons, I still labored in vain to make them appear to me as phantasms, though I had before involuntarily seen them in that manner, and perceived them some time after when I least thought of them. The phantasms appeared to me contrary to my inclination, as if they were presented to me from without, like the phenomena of nature, though they existed no where but within my mind. I could at the same time distinguish between phantasms and real objects, and the calmness with which I examined them enabled me to avoid the commission of the smallest mistake. I knew exactly when it only appeared to me that the door was opening and a phantasm entering the room, and when it actually opened and a real person entered.

“ These phantasms appeared equally clear and distinct at all times and under all circumstances, both when I was by myself, and when I was in company ; as well in the day as at night, and in my own house as well as abroad. They were, however, less frequent when I was in the house of a friend, and rarely appeared to me in the street. When I shut my eyes, these phantasms would sometimes disappear entirely, though there were instances when I beheld them with my eyes closed. Yet when they disappeared on such occasions, they generally re-appeared when I opened my eyes. I conversed sometimes with my physician and my wife, of the phantasms which at the moment surrounded me. They appeared more frequently walking than at rest, nor were they constantly present. They frequently did not appear for some time, but always re-appeared for a longer

or a shorter period either singly or in company, the latter however being most frequently the case. I generally saw human forms of both sexes, but they usually appeared not to take the smallest notice of each other, moving as in a market place where all are eager to press through the crowd. At times, however, they seemed to be transacting business with each other. I also saw several times people on horse-back, dogs and birds. All these phantasms appeared to me in their natural size, and as distinct as if alive, exhibiting different shades of carnation in the uncovered parts, as well as in different colors and fashions in their dresses, though the colors seemed somewhat paler than in real nature; none of the figures appeared particularly terrible, comical, or disgusting, most of them being of an indifferent shape, and some having a pleasing appearance.

“ The longer these phantasms continued to appear, the more frequently did they return, while at the same time they increased in number about four weeks after they had first appeared. I also began to hear them talk. The phantasms sometimes conversed among themselves, but more frequently addressed their discourse to me. Their speeches were commonly short, and never of an unpleasant turn. At different times there appeared to me both dear and sensible friends of both sexes, whose addresses tended to appease my grief, which had not yet wholly subsided. These consolatory speeches were in general addressed to me when I was alone; sometimes I was accosted by these consoling friends while in company, frequently while real persons were speaking to me. These consolatory addresses consisted sometimes of abrupt phrases, and at others they were regularly connected.

“ Though both my mind and body were in a tolerable state of sanity all this time, and these phantasms became so familiar to me that they did not cause me the slightest uneasiness, and I even sometimes amused myself with surveying them, and

spoke jocularly of them to my physician and my wife, I yet did not neglect to use proper medicines, especially when they began to haunt me the whole day, and even at night as soon as I awaked.

“ At last it was agreed that leeches should be again applied to me, as formerly;* which was actually done April 20th, 1791, at eleven o'clock in the morning. No person was with me besides the surgeon, but during the operation my chamber was crowded with human phantasms of all descriptions. This continued uninterruptedly till about half an hour after four o'clock, just when my digestion commenced. I then perceived that they began to move more slowly. Soon after, their color began to fade, and at seven o'clock they were entirely white. But they moved very little, though the forms were as distinct as before; growing, however, by degrees more obscure, yet not fewer in number than had generally been the case. The phantoms did not withdraw nor did they vanish, which previous to that time had frequently happened. They now seemed to dissolve in the air; while fragments of some of them continued visible a considerable time. About eight o'clock the room was entirely cleared of my fantastic visitors.

“ Since this time I have felt twice or three times a sensation as if these phantasms were going to re-appear, without however actually seeing any thing. The same sensation surprised me just before I drew up this account, while I was examining some papers relative to these apparitions which I had drawn up in the year 1791.”

M. Nicolai puzzled himself without much cause, in attempting to find the exclusive ori-

* Leeches were applied formerly, as M. Nicolai mentions in the part of the account we have not copied. They were applied for congestions of the head, and not for apparitions, as the word “formerly” would here seem to imply.

gin of the apparitions by which he was visited. Indeed, after confessing that he could not reduce them to any known laws of association or imagination, he says, they will probably remain “as inscrutable as the origin of “thought and reflection.” Though he had some faint conception of it, from his own account, he had not perfectly considered the analogy betwixt these apparitions and his ideas. Though it may not seem to be making any advance in our knowledge of the human mind on a slight examination, I cannot but consider that the reflection that ideas, dreams, and apparitions, are sometimes explicable and sometimes inexplicable, that in fact the taking the three divisions as bearing a complete analogy to each other, will prove a very great means of simplifying philosophical disquisitions on these subjects. Mental apparitions, however, are those only which should be considered as bearing the analogy with dreams and ideas; those of deception from external causes, require separate investigation.

Those who will carefully consider M. Nicolai's relation, will perceive a very great difference betwixt his apparitions and those which are commonly considered as supernatural; indeed that age must have been almost incalculably barbarous which could be so deceived as to imagine his phantasms to be any but the productions of a disordered intellect. He saw them sometimes with his eyes shut.— This would have proved, in the most uncivilized period, that they were internal. The most singularly observable difference between these apparitions and those which are more commonly considered supernatural, is the vanishing. All the apparitions of which I ever read, vanished at once; M. Nicolai's, however, disappeared piece by piece, and dissolved gradually, just as a painting of winter, with sympathetic colors, dissolves before the sun. Indeed the change of color to white completely, before they vanished, bears a very great resemblance to the transformation of

some of those sympathetic paintings. He could tell the difference between an apparition's seeming to open the door and to come in, and its opening and the entrance of a real person. This is not the case, however, with most of supernatural visitants, for the seers frequently do not know that they are supernatural, till they are informed of their precise nature.

Dr. Ferriar will pardon me, if I here take an opportunity of shortly observing upon his very interesting little work. He has considered, with great ingenuity and research, the proof of the existence of morbid spectral impressions without any sensible external agency, and has made the third of his positions, and in fact the chief end of his book, "the application of these principles to the "best authenticated examples of apparitions." What must be the surprise, however, of every considerate reader, when he finds that the

learned Doctor has related only three, or at most four stories of apparitions, and the particulars of those he has not examined, but applied them, or rather left those who may peruse his work to apply them, to the principles he has stated. He has extracted relations of Cardan, of Kotter, of Petrarch, and Ben Jonson, &c. which would hardly in any period be considered as supernatural, and which would not at any rate be confounded with common apparitions. He says, that, by the key which he has furnished, readers of history will have found a mode of explaining many difficulties by which they were before greatly embarrassed; but I am afraid there is no one who has not perused the “Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions,” without some disappointment. The Doctor might certainly have made his work more complete, with less research into books with which few are acquainted, and with the contents of which few are interested. With respect to

the application of the principle of morbid spectral impressions, surely Dr. Ferriar, considering his great research, could not suppose it to be unknown: by reference to writers who have dropped ideas on the subject, he will find that it was known even as far back as the time of Plato; and God knows how many ages before that period.

The version of the ghost of Mr. Booty, from a recollection of which I have given the particulars stated in the text, I have not been able to refer to, though I perfectly remember having seen it so related somewhere in the Gentleman's Magazine; and in a number some weeks after the relation, which stated that the case was brought before the Court of King's Bench, I remember also its being objected that no mention was made of the judge who presided at the time when the action was brought by Mrs. Booty for defamation, whereas, had that been mentioned, a single

reference to the Court Rolls would have decided whether such an action had ever been brought.

Those who are better versed in apparition stories than myself, inform me that the most authenticated story of Mr. Booty was, that he was baker to the ship, though the only account of the event which is now in my possession states him to have been a miser, without mentioning any trade. This account professes to be taken “from the records of Westminster,” though what the whole story had to do upon the records of any court of Westminster, it would puzzle the wisest head to determine. It states that three captains of ships, named Barnaby, Brissow, and Brewer, landed on the island of Lusara, to shoot sea-birds. They, and other persons who were in their company, saw the appearance of a person in grey clothes, whom Captain Barnaby instantly denominated “Mr. “Booty, my near neighbour in London,” run

into the crater of mount Strombolo. There followed Mr. Booty a man in black, whom they alleged to be the devil. The widow of Mr. Booty, from this account, brought her action for defamation, and Captain Barnaby, the defendant, obtained a verdict. The judge's name, however, is not mentioned, though it might easily be known whether such an action was ever brought, for the date of the ghost is given, May 6, 1672, and it could not be very long after that, that the case would come before a court of justice. What I have said in the body of my essay on this and all such cases, will equally apply to all accounts of this story. The appearance of two persons, one in black and the other in grey, makes it more probable than in the other account where Mr. Booty was alone, that the whole was an exhalation of some kind.

*“ The apparitions in many such cases may
“ have been occasioned by such a state of the*

“ body as would in itself terminate in death.”

—P. 364.

It is related of a well-known literary character, that as he was sitting in his study, a room with which the passage communicated that led to the kitchen, he was interrupted in his pursuits by a little old woman, who had on her arm a basket of provisions. The gentleman requested the good woman to step into the kitchen, to which he supposed she had mistaken her way, and in order that he might not be further disturbed by her, opened the door and shewed her which direction she was to take. After he had returned to his studies, he found himself again assailed by the little old woman. He expostulated with her, and again shewed her the road to the kitchen; but after he had resumed his labors, he again found the old woman at his elbow. He instantly conceived his real situation; rang the bell, and sent for a surgeon, who bled him, and the old woman did not again trouble him. The surgeon informed him that his blood was in such a state, that had he not been bled, he would have undoubtedly sustained a fit of apoplexy, which would in all probability have carried him off.

I am not certain whether this case has ever been before the public, but if it has, it is singular enough to excuse its repetition.

There is one kind of dream which I have not examined, but which is very remarkable on first consideration, or, rather on its first

appearance to the mind, without consideration. It is a kind of double dream, of which there have been two or three authenticated instances.

In one case, a Mr. Joseph Wilkins dreamt he was going to London, and that on his way he stopped at his father's house in Gloucestershire, tried the doors (it being night), went up stairs into his father's room, and informed his mother, his father being asleep, that he had come to bid her farewell, for he was going a long journey. On this, he thought his mother exclaimed "O! dear son, thee art dead!" on which he awoke. Shortly after this dream, he had a letter from home, stating that his mother had been awake on such a night on which he had appeared, coming and trying the doors, &c. and had told her he was going a long journey, at which time she made the exclamation—"O! dear son, thee art dead!" She persisted she was awake, and Mr. Wilkins himself, from all circumstances, believed the dream and the vision to have happened at the same instant.

People have no doubt been frequently deceived into an idea of their being awake, from their dreaming that they were so, and this I think must have been the case with Mr Wilkins' mother.

The next instance which I have procured, is related in the London Magazine for July, 1765. It is there stated, that a

particular gentleman dreamt that he was pushing against the door of a room in a house with which he was well acquainted, and that the people who were in that room were, at the very instant of the gentleman's dream, alarmed by a violent pushing against the door; indeed it was necessary to hold it, and to use very great exertion to prevent its being broken down. As soon as the attempt to burst open the door was ended, and all was still, the house was searched, but nothing was found which was likely to have caused such extraordinary efforts to break into the room.

It is very remarkable that in both these accounts, one party appears to have been awake; in the former one it may have happened that Mrs. Wilkins only dreamt she was not asleep, but in the latter case, there must have been some extraordinarily coincident attempts to break open the door, for the party was awakened and was obliged to use great exertions in his own defence. It is probable that in the former case the exact coincidence of expressions was produced by a desire in superstitious and ignorant people to make the two parts of the story agree with one another; and that in the latter, some house dog was overlooked in the search for the cause of the

disturbance: the efforts are related to have been great, but the imagination always exaggerates when it knows not the power with which it is contending. Some superstitious men, in *explaining* such stories, say that no doubt the *soul* was transported while the body was left in a state of torpor. This mode of explanation, however, requires much greater credulity than that we have adopted, though it generally happens that the simplest solutions of such events are looked upon as fanciful and far-fetched by those who cling to the prejudices of their ancestors.

Sometime in the beginning of last century there was a story of a remarkably prophetic dream, which was said to have been related before a court of justice, and was much talked of I think in the West of England. One person dreamt that another, a friend of his, was accompanied on a short journey by two men, one tall and the other little, and robbed and murdered by these men in a particular part of the road. The dream was so perfect, that, when two men made their appearance in reality to the dreamer, he recognized them, and cautioned his friend against accompanying them on his journey. He did accompany them, and was murdered and his property taken from him at the very part of the road which had been

presented to the dreamer in his sleep, and the dream was the principal means of discovering the murderers, who were taken and executed.

If I had been told this dream after it had happened, and before the men were seen by the dreamer, I might have believed it to be something supernatural. As it happens in the end, however, with all these stories, there wants evidence for every particular, and there is no proof that the whole is not a fabrication.

Even though an apparition or a dream were prophetic, to prove that it was supernatural, it is necessary to show that the prophecy was contrary to all human calculation, that the event which constituted its fulfilment was most improbable in itself, and most accurately corresponding with the announcement in every particular. In a simple state of society, a shrewd observer reckoning upon what has already happened, may make wonderful progress in divining what is to come.

This is what is called *second sight*. When we go very far back in society, we find sacred prophecies which are either calculations upon what is likely to take place, or rhapsodies so mysterious, that they will apply to almost every possible circumstance. Ancient times are so hidden in obscurity, that only Theologians would think it worth while to examine them. In modern history we have no accounts of prophetic apparitions, or of prophetic men, who foresaw any thing which prudence would not enable any person to discover.

“*Apparitions by appointment*,” p. 384.—I am credibly informed that the chaplain of the present Sir M. W. Ridley’s grandfather made with that person a contract, that the first that died should if possible appear to the other. No apparition, however, was the consequence of this agreement. I am acquainted with two or three similar contracts, to one of

which I am a party ; if any apparition should shew itself in fulfilment of any one of these contracts, the world will know it.

There is a story in the *La Belle Assemblée* for July 1806, of Lord Tyrone having appeared to Lady Beresford, who had been very loose in her principles, in consequence of an appointment. Lady Beresford, it is said, expressed great doubts as to the reality of the apparition ; in consequence of which he marked her wrist, and turned the curtains of the bed up in a most supernatural manner, in order to confirm her in her belief of his having appeared, when she awoke in the morning. She related the story the next day to her husband, and shortly after, a letter arrived announcing the death of Lord Tyrone.—The ghost wrote in her pocket book, and the account states that the writing is yet extant.

The evidence for these stories always fails somewhere. In this instance, it is unfortunate that there is no proof of the facts he relates before the public, but the supposition of the relater's own veracity ; but even if the hand writing and the ribbon which covered Lady Beresford's withered wrist were produced, there is no proof of the apparition. Lady Beresford alone saw it, and the only unex-

ceptionable proof died with her. The appearance of persons after death by appointment has been often urged by the clergy as a *proof* of the immortality of the soul; if it could prove any thing, however, it would only shew that there was a possibility of a semblance of the body appearing after death, but the soul, from its immaterial nature, surely could not assume the form of any thing material. If we agree with the common belief, viz. that the soul flies at the moment of death, we must believe it to be invisible, for no man ever saw the soul flying out at the window or through the roof of the room in which the body had just expired.

To return for a moment to the subject of dreaming: May we not arrive at as complete an explanation of its phenomena as possible, considering our want of knowledge of primary causation? We cannot find out what is the reason why a particular food affects the mind

in a particular manner, because we know not what the mind is, except from plausible conjecture. The effects of particular aliment upon the mind are chiefly relative; thus, one man feels great benefit to his powers of thinking from drinking coffee, another from drinking wine, and another from drinking porter, because they were used to these liquors, though perhaps if each were to drink what was nourishment to the other, all would feel their intellectual faculties injured rather than improved, but the reason why any aliment has its effect upon the mind, except it be relatively, we cannot discover. If, however, by an examination of the lives of persons who have lived in the simplest manner (see note p. 376), we can find that those persons, according to some connexion between their food and their ideas, had particular dreams, we may, after having had some experience in the connexion which we have not yet acquired, be enabled to say, according to

the quantity of food, and its tendency upon the powers of digestion, what will be the nature of any person's dream, and even what will be its precise duration, till by degrees we may procure such an exact knowledge of dreams, that we shall be able to find what number of figures will appear to us, what variety of scenery, or what number of speeches will be made to us.

I have often heard people relate, as remarkable examples of prophetic dreaming, that they, or their friends, had dreamt of a particular number in the lottery, which has afterwards been drawn a considerable prize. The person who dreamt of the number must have had an idea of it before he dreamt, or it would not have been presented to him ; and we have already said too much about coincidence to require us to give an explanation of the fact of the ticket having been drawn a prize.—People are frequently heard to say they are

very true dreamers. There are persons who consider the recurrence of circumstances they have formerly known and dreamt of, as fulfilments of prophecies.

Perhaps it never entered the minds of the most superstitious advocates of second sight, to add to it a means of the *seer's* transporting himself through the air from one place to another. Yet Aubrey relates an instance (Miscellanies, p. 158-9.), in which an earl of Cathness said he had asked a second-sighted person to inform him where a particular vessel was, which he kept for bringing home wine and other provisions. The man replied, four hours sail distant, and as a proof that he was relating what was true, he produced the cap of one of the seamen, which he had got from off his head immediately before. When the vessel arrived, one of the seamen claimed the cap, and said it had been carried from off his head by a gust of wind ! This transporta-

tion by invisible power leads me to say a few words upon witchcraft, of which such transportation was wont to be a proof and a qualification. It is singular, that with all the *proofs* of witchcraft, which have often been many degrees stronger than those in favor of apparitions, the belief in that power, in the kingdoms of Great Britain at least, is now much diminished and almost extinguished. Perhaps the unrelenting persecution with which witchcraft was visited, tended greatly to eradicate both the belief and the *practice*. “*Nam tua res agitur, quum paries proximus ardet.*”—The old women as well as the young probably thought it politic to accuse nobody of witchcraft, lest they might themselves hazard a ducking or a roasting, in the same manner as Hopkins, the witch-finder, was burnt at last, after having spent his life in procuring the destruction of his fellow creatures. I rather think that in some countries where witches are not in such great danger, old women may still

be pointed at for having thrown maidens into fits, and prevented cows from giving milk.— But, however generally suppressed, witchcraft is still partially believed in, in superstitious districts. A gentleman, on whose veracity I can depend, informs me that in Ross-shire, within his own recollection, there were some persons who were believed to practise witchcraft. One George Hossack, in a district of that county, shot a hare as she was leaping through a hedge, and presently there appeared on the other side of the hedge an old woman who was a reputed witch, wounded in the leg. It was of course circulated that the woman had returned to her proper shape, after she had been wounded in the leg in the shape of a hare; though probably the man only set abroad that report to save himself from the imputation of having fired at a hare and shot an old woman. Another woman in the same neighbourhood accused an elder of the church with having violated her person.

After the most candid and impartial examination, it was declared that the elder was innocent; that the woman had been violated by the *devil in his shape*, and she was excommunicated !

The devil, poor angel, has been calumniated with every crime which has disgraced human nature from the creation to the present time, though St. James plainly tells us that man is tempted “of his own lust.” I remember, when very young, several instances having been made near where I resided to raise his satanic majesty ; for my part, I confess I was so superstitious once as to try to raise him myself, but whether he had heard of my intention of writing against him, or he was “asleep, or on a journey,” I could not discover ; however, he never deigned to convince me of his existence, and his neglect to appear has, perhaps for his own *good* purposes, confirmed me in my opinion that he is either de-

funct or never lived. I have heard from residents, that in a certain town in Norfolk (the name of which I would mention, but that I am afraid of so far calumniating its good inhabitants), a number of true believers assembled in the church, and read the Lord's prayer backwards, (which, with other ceremonies, is an old and approved receipe,) on which the church was filled with smoke, and a very powerful hissing ensued, which lasted for some minutes. I have heard from another quarter, that one of the parishioners prophanely dropped a hint that a horn stuffed with tow was found not far from the place whence the smoke issued.

I am not quite certain as to the nature of the corps-candles. Perhaps they may be of different kinds, for, as some persons relate instances of their having appeared upon a table, and in dry situations, they cannot all be the common Will-o'-the-wisp. Probably those in-

stances which are related to have appeared in such situations proceeded from fish, or some phosphoric substance, of the nature of which the people who saw them were ignorant. To ascertain their precise nature requires a personal investigation which I have not yet made, but which I shall take the earliest opportunity of making.

I shall now proceed to enumerate such differences in relations, as will shew that apparitions have only existed according to the ideas people have formed of them, and not from any standard. This will prove them to be merely imaginary.

A Mrs. Bretton appeared to a person who had been her servant, in order to procure from a relation the gift of a certain portion of land to the poor. This may serve as an instance of the coldness of ghosts. The servant, whose name was Alice, expressed great surprise, as well she might, at the appearance of her mistress. She said, "were not my Mistress dead, I should not question but that you are she. She replied, I am the same that was your Mistress, and took her by the hand; which *Alice* affirmed was as cold as a Clod."—*Glanvil's Saducismus triumphatus*, 1681, page 239.

Aubrey has the following :—

“ T. M. Esq., an old Acquaintance of mine, hath assured me, that about a quarter of a Year after his first wife’s death as he lay in Bed awake, with his Grand-child, his Wife *opened the Closet Door*, and came into the Chamber by the Bed side, and looked upon him, and stooped down and Kissed him ; her Lips were warm, he fancied they would have been cold. He was about to have Embraced her, but was afraid it might have done him hurt. When she went from him, he asked her when he should see her again ? She turned about and smiled, but said nothing. The Closet Door striked, as it uses to do, both at her coming in and going out.”—*Miscellanies, &c. p. 82.*

As an instance of an apparition which appeared unsubstantial, we may refer to the first which we related in this appendix.

The following is the conclusion of one of Glanvil’s stories :—

“ *David Hunter* told her he never knew her. No, says she, *I died Seven years before you came into the Countrey* : But for all that, if he would do her Message, she would never hurt him. But he deferred doing as the Apparition bid him, and she appeared the night efter as he lay in bed, and struck him on the shoulder very hard ; at which he cried out, and askt her if she did not promise she would not hurt him ? She said, that was if he did her Message ; if not, she would kill him. He told her he could not go now by reason the Waters were out. She said she was content he should stay till they were abated ; but

charged him afterwards not to fail her. So he did her errand, and afterwards she appeared and gave him thanks. *For now,* said she, *I shall be at rest, therefore pray you lift me up from the ground, and I will trouble you no more* So David Hunter lifted her up from the ground, and as he said, she felt just like a bag of Feathers in his arms. So she vanisht, and he heard most delicate Musick as she went off, over his head; and he never was more troubled.”—*Glanvil*, p. 286-7.

“The Doctor,” (Scot) “as I have the Story related, was sitting alone by the Fire, either in his Study, or his Parlour, in *Broad-Street* where he liv’d, and reading a Book, his Door being shut fast and lock’d; he was well assured there was no body in the Room but himself, when accidentally raising his Head a little, he was exceedingly surpris’d to see sitting in an Elbow-Chair, at the other side of the Fire-place, or Chimney, an ancient, grave Gentleman in a black Velvet gown, a long Wig, and looking with a pleasing countenance towards him (*the Doctor*) as if just going to speak.”—*Moreton’s Secrets of the invisible World disclosed*, p. 295

“After this Discourse, and the Doctor promising to go down into the Country, and dispatch this important Commission; the Apparition putting on a very pleasant and smiling Aspect, thank’d him, and disappear’d.”—*Ibid.* p. 299.

We have already had a ghost which opened and shut doors with all proper civility, viz. the ghost of the wife whose lips were warm. The famous ghost of Mrs. Veal, related in the introduction to *Drelincourt on Death*,

felt and spoke exactly as if she had been alive, and when she took her leave of her friend, did not vanish, but went out of the door, and was not lost sight of till she had turned the corner. The question naturally suggests itself here, why do not all ghosts act in the same manner?—or, why do not the ghosts of the good act in one manner and the ghosts of the wicked in another manner? This question is unanswerable, except that ghosts proceed entirely from the imagination. Some obstinate believer will say, however, that real ghosts have all one conduct, those of imagination only are variable. The question then resolves itself into this; which are the real ghosts? This would puzzle all the ghost seers that ever existed to determine, for there is just as much evidence for one kind as for another.

All the witches, of whose appearance we have the most authenticated relations, come through walls and closed windows, and do

not seem to have felt interruption from any common interposing substance. Glanvil, and other of the sage defenders of witchcraft, attribute this readiness of passing through what would be considered obstacles to common mortals, to what they call their astral spirits, which they managed to send abroad instead of themselves.

Two men were seized at Guilford, for having murdered an old man of the name of Bower, and put into gaol to the same cell with another who had been committed for a robbery. The night on which the two were thrown into prison, “this third Man was awakened about one of the Clock, and greatly terrified with an Old Man, who had a great gash cross his Throat almost from Ear to Ear, and a wound down his Breast”—*Glanvil, &c. p. 232.* This was an apparition through the prison door, or through the wall of the cell. See the converse:—“And so it went away over the Rails into the Wood there, in the like Manner as any Man would go over a Style to his apprehension.”—*Ibid. 212.*

Ghosts will be recollected by those who have been at all conversant in stories of supernatural appearances, which have passed through trees and bushes, and other obstacles.

It is sufficient that they are proved to pass through obstacles in general. It would be in vain to instance all the cases which have occurred. Mr. Grose has enumerated most of those instances of difference in the ingenious essay from which I made an extract in the commencement of this enquiry, and I should not myself have dwelt so long upon them, had it not been considered by many enlightened men who profess to believe in apparitions, that the not giving examples of those differences proceeded from inability to give them.

It may not be improper, in passing, to notice some arguments for apparitions which are adduced in spite of the differences we have been enumerating. Those *arguments*, though not applicable to this or any particular part of the subject, but to apparitions generally, it may be better to state, than to pass by in total silence, especially as superstitious people

of all kinds are apt to consider what remains unanswered, as unanswerable. We have already stated that apparitions are asserted to prove the immortality of the soul, but the strength of that *argument* in favor of the soul's immortality is very much diminished, when we find that those who adduce it likewise bring forward the immortality of the soul to prove the possibility of ghosts!—Mr. Glanvil has the following passage:—

“ This is the common argument of those that deny the Being of *Apparitions*, they have Travelled all hours of the night, and never saw any thing worse than themselves (which may well be) and thence they conclude, that all pretended *Apparitions* are *Fancies* or *Impostures*. But why do not such arguers conclude, that there was never a Cut-purse in *London*, because they have lived there many years without being met with by any of those Practisers? Certainly he that denies *Apparitions* upon the confidence of this *Negative* against the vast heap of *Positive* assurances, is credulous in believing there was ever any *Highway-man* in the World, if he himself was never robbed. And the Trials of Assizes and Attestations of those that have (if he will be just) ought to move his assent no more in this case than in that of *Witches* and *Apparitions*, which have the very same evidence.”

I should not have mentioned this, if it had been the argument of Mr. Glanvil only. But

as I hear it every day alleged in favor of the existence of apparitions, it must not be passed by unnoticed. The great question here is, is there any belief like that in supernatural appearances? Is there any doctrine or dogma which has a similar foundation with such a belief? The belief in God? That is supported by the most incontestible evidence.— A belief in cut-purses or highwaymen? That is a belief which cannot be controverted.— There is in fact no belief like that in apparitions and supernatural phenomena in general. It stands alone, and therefore ought not to be compared with any other. It is the confounding of this belief with others that are better founded, that has so firmly fixed it in the minds of many generations. If mankind would have considered it alone, when it first gained dominion over their minds, it would have been cast off as unworthy of rational beings. It is said that the whole universe is peopled with millions of spiritual beings, and

therefore we have no reason to discredit the existence or possibility of apparitions. Rather, however, than allow this to support the belief, I make it a ground of denying the possibility of ghosts altogether; for, if the world be peopled with such a number of spiritual beings, they are invisible to any of our senses, and therefore before any of them could appear to us, they must change their nature or we must change ours, which, as far as our knowledge extends, is impossible.*

* Stay a little, cries a sage apparitionist, when he comes to this passage; how can you write thus? Does not this assertion of yours include and deny the whole act of vanishing from the creation even until now?—This deserves a slight examination. The assertion that the air is peopled with spirits proves nothing, because it adduces one disputed existence in support of another disputed existence. That these spirits must change their nature, then, before any of them appear to us, is the only question. There are certainly such things as vanishings in nature. A candle is dissipated to our eyes, though the substance is only attenuated and mingled with the air in smoke and vapor. But all natural vanishings are from substance to less substance; whereas this one most singular transformation of apparitions is to change from a thinner state to a thicker. This change is not sufficient, for after it we have a vanishing back again to

We now proceed to state a few of the attributes of apparitions, such as we have mentioned in our essay (p. 419.)

As an instance of an apparition appearing without being recognized to be such, we may cite the story of Mrs. Bretton, which we have already mentioned. The passage we have cited, commencing “were not my mistress dead, &c.” shews that the seer did not know who it was she saw till she was informed.

One Thomas Goddard saw a person like his deceased father in law :—“When he came near, the apparition spake to him with an audible voice these words, *Are you afraid?* To which he answered, I am thinking on one who is dead and buried, whom you are like. To which the apparition replied with the like voice, I am he that you were thinking on, I am *Edward Avon*,

the former state. Now let us imagine a candle to be burnt away, and that candle to be restored again to its former condition from the smoke into which it had been dissolved. This is a parallel case, as near as may be, with apparitions. The whole system of apparition-vanishing, whether in the shape of devils or angels, with lights or without, is most ridiculous.—Miracle-mongers talk about our not knowing the laws of nature, and they therefore say that such things as miracles, apparitions, and the like, (indeed the latter is a species of the former) may be according to the laws of nature. It is common with human laws to contradict one another; but it is not the case with the laws of nature; and any thing we find contradicting what we now know to be a principle in natural philosophy, cannot be a law of nature, but a phantom of prejudice.

your father in law ; come near to me, I will do you no harm. To which *Goddard* answered, I trust in him who hath bought my soul with his precious blood, you shall do me no harm. Then the *apparition* said, How stand cases at home ? *Goddard* askt—What cases ?” *Glanvil*, p. 210.

This is a very singular case ; for the apparition knows, from the whole of the account, neither what is past, nor what is to come.

At another appearance of the same apparition, William Avon, the son of the deceased person whose apparition it was, was in company with *Goddard* ; when it appeared, *Goddard* ‘ called to his brother in law, and said, Here is the *apparition* of our father, who said, I see nothing. Then *Goddard* fell on his knees and said, Lord open his eyes that he may see it. But he replied, Lord grant I may not see it, if it be thy blessed will.” As soon as the apparition vanished, “*Avon* told *Goddard* he heard his voice and understood what he said, and heard other words distinct from his, but could not understand a word of it, nor saw any *Apparition* at all.” *Glanvil*, p. 215.

There is a story of a cure which is accompanied by an apparition. The woman cured was called *Jesch Claes*, though I have some accounts of her story which call her *Janet*. “ This Woman for fourteen years had been lame of both Legs, one of them being dead and without feeling, so that she could not go but creep upon the ground, or was carried in People’s Arms as a Child, but now through the power of God Almighty she hath walked again. Which came to pass after this manner, as I have taken it from her own mouth. In the year 1676 about the 13th or 14th of

this Month *October*, in the Night between one and two of the Clock, this *Jesch Claes* being in bed with her Husband, who was a Boatman, she was three times pulled by her Arm, with which she waked and cried out, O Lord ! What may this be ? Hereupon she heard an answer in plain words : Be not afraid, I come in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Your malady which hath for many years been upon you shall cease, and it shall be given you from God Almighty to walk again. But keep this to yourself till further answer. Whereupon she cried aloud, O Lord ! That I had a light that I might know what this is. Then had she this answer, There needs no light, the light shall be given you from God. Then came light all over the room, and she saw a beautiful Youth about Ten years of Age, with Curled Yellow Hair, Clothed in White to the Feet, who went from the Bed's-head to the Chimney with a light which a little after vanished." *Glanvil*, p. 252.

Besides other peculiarities which it possessed, my readers will not fail to notice that this ghost was a decided Trinitarian, whereas, had it appeared at Constantinople or Peking, it would have spoken of Mahomet or Fot.

Glanvil has the following singular instance of appearing and disappearing in music ; it is related in a letter :—

“ Sir, my service to you and your Lady. Now according to your desire I shall write what my Cousin told me : Her name was *Mary Watkinson*, her Father did live in *Smithfield*, but she

was Married to one *Francis Toppam*, and she did live in *York*, with her Husband, being an ill one, who did steal her away against her Parents' consent, so that they could not abide him. But she came often to them, and when she was last with him" (her father) "upon their parting, she expressed that she feared she should never see him more. He answered her, if he should die, if ever God did permit the dead to see the living, he would see her again. Now, after he had been Buried about half a year, on a Night, when she was in bed but could not sleep, she heard Musick, and the Chamber grew lighter and lighter, and she being broad awake, saw her Father stand at her bedside: Who said, *Mal*, did not I tell thee that I would see thee once again? She called him Father, and talked of many things; and he bad her be Patient and Dutiful to her Mother And when she told him that she had a child since he did dye, he said that would not trouble her long. He bad her speak what she would now to him, for he must go, and that he should never see her more till they met in the Kingdom of Heaven. So the Chamber grew darker and darker, and he was gone with Musick. And she said that she did never dream of him, nor ever did see any Apparition of him after."

With regard to what has been said by apparitions of a future-state, we may refer our readers to the well-known story of Major Sydenham, who appeared to Captain Dyke, and said to him, "Cap., Cap. I could not come at the time appointed, but I am now come to tell you, that there is a God, and a very just and terrible one, and if you do not turn over a new leaf you will find it so."

I have some recollection of a story which I cannot now find, but the substance of which was, that a person appeared to an old friend of his and had a long conversation with him, in which he informed him that such and such persons were in hell, but

he durst not reveal the mode of treatment there adopted. My readers will themselves call to mind numerous instances of ghosts which have said that they could not inform the seers of what was going on in heaven or hell, as they were strictly forbidden to reveal what passed in those districts.

In connexion with what I have said about dreams, and visions mistaken for dreams, I find that I have omitted the following stories, which, however, it may not be unacceptable yet to notice :

John Evelyn, Esq. ; R. S. S. shewed us at the Royal Society a note under Mr. Smith's Hand, (the Curate of Deptford) that in November, 1679, as he was in Bed sick of an Ague, came to him the Vision of a Master of Arts, with a white Wand in his Hand, and told him that if he did lie on his Back three Hours, viz. from Ten to One, that he should be rid of his Ague. He lay a good while on his Back ; but at last being weary he turned, and immediately the Ague attack'd him, afterwards he strictly followed the Directions, and was perfectly cured. He was awake, and it was in the day-time."

"This puts me in Mind of a Dream of old Farmer Good, a neighbour of mine at *Broad Chalk*, who being ill, dreamt that he met with an old friend of his (long since deceased) by *Knighton Ashes* (in that Parish) who told him, that if he rose out of his Bed, that he would die. He awaked, and rose to make Water, and was immediately seized with a shivering Fit, and died of an Ague, aged 84."—*Aubrey's Miscellanies*, p. 87.

The reader will almost instantly, upon the relation of these stories, think of the explana-

tion. It was plain that the object of the first was too weak to know whether what he saw was a dream or a reality. An idea passed through his mind, that if he should lie on his back, his ague would be cured; that idea was coupled by some connexion, which himself only could explain, with a master of arts; he followed his idea, and it succeeded; though had it failed, he would have considered the vision as the mere freak of his distempered imagination. It is very likely that old Farmer Good thought in his sleep that if he rose he would be catching cold, though even when asleep, the necessity of rising presented itself so forcibly, that he instantly arose when his sleep ceased.

As it may be useful to examine as many of the best authenticated stories as possible, I shall now relate a vision which occurred to a captain who translated some of Luther's works. It is taken originally from the pre-

face to the translation of Luther's Table Talk.

“ I Captain *Henry Bell* do hereby declare both to the present Age and to Posterity, that being employ'd beyond the Seas in State affairs divers Years together, both by King *James* and also by the late King *Charles* in *Germany*, I did hear and understand in all Places great Bewailing and Lamentation made, by reason of destroying and burning of above fourscore Thousand of *Martin Luther's* Books, entituled, *His last Divine Discourses*. Upon which Divine Work or *Discourses* the Reformation, begun before in *Germany*, was wonderfully promoted and spread in other Countries. But afterwards it so fell out, that the Pope then living, viz. *Gregory XIII* understanding what great Hurt and Prejudice he and his Religion had already received by reason of the said *Luther's* Discourses, and also fearing that the same might bring further Contempt and Mischief upon himself and his Church, he, therefore to prevent the same, did fiercely stir up and instigate the Emperor then in being, viz. *Rodolphus III.* to make an Edict through the whole Empire that all the fore-said Printed Books should be burned, and also that it should be *Death* for any Person to have or keep a Copy thereof, but to burn the same, which *Edict* was speedily put in Execution accordingly; insomuch that not one of all the said Printed Books, nor any one Copy of the same could be found out or heard of in any Place. Yet it pleased God, that in *Anno 1626*, a *German* Gentleman named *Casparus Van Sparr*, with whom in my stay in *Germany* about King *James's* business I became familiarly known and acquainted, having occasion to Build upon an old Foundation of a House, wherein his Grand Father dwelt at that time when the said *Edict* was Published in *Germany*, for the burning the said Books, and digging deep under the said old Foundation one of the said Original Printed Books was there happily found, lying in a deep obscure hole, being wrapped in a

strong Linnen-Cloth which was waxed all over with Bees-wax within and without, whereby the said Book was preserved fair without any Blemish. And at the same time *Ferdinandus II.* being Emperor of *Germany*, who was a severe Enemy and Persecutor of the Protestant Religion, the foresaid Gentleman, and Grandchild to him that had hidden the said Book in that obscure Hole, fearing that if the said Emperor should get Knowledge that one of the said Books were yet forth-coming, and in his Custody, whereby not only himself might be brought into trouble, but also the Book might be in Danger to be destroyed, as all the rest were long before; and also calling to Mind that I had the *High-Dutch* Tongue very perfect, did send the said Original Book over hither into *England* unto me: Related to me the Passages of the preserving and finding the said Book; and earnestly moved me in his Letter to Translate the said Book into *English*.—Whereupon, I took the said Book before me and many times began to Translate the same, but always I was hindred therein, being called upon about other Business, in so much that by no possible means I could remain by that Work. Then about six Weeks after I had received the said Book it fell out, that being in Bed with my Wife, one Night between twelve and one a Clock, she being asleep, but myself yet awake, there appear'd unto me an Antient Man standing at my Bed-side arrayed all in White, having a long and broad white Beard, hanging down to his Girdle Steed, who taking me by the right Ear spake these Words following unto me; *Sirrah, Will not you take time to Translate that Book which is sent unto you out of Germany? I will provide for you both Place and Time to do it:* And then he vanish'd out of my Sight.—Whereupon being much affrighted, I fell into an extream Sweat, insomuch that my Wife awaking, and finding me all over wet she ask'd me what I ailed? I told her what I had seen and heard; but I never did heed or regard Visions nor Dreams. And so the same fell soon out of my mind.—Then about a Fortnight after

I had seen the Vision, on a *Sunday* I went to *Whitehall* to hear the Sermon, after which ended, I return'd to my Lodging which was then in *King-street* at *Westminster*, and sitting down to Dinner with my Wife, two Messengers were sent from the Council-board with a Warrant to carry me to the Keeper of the *Gatehouse* at *Westminster* there to be safely kept, until farther Order from the Lords of the Council; which was done without shewing any Cause* at all, wherefore I was committed; upon which said Warrant I was kept there Ten whole Years close Prisoner; where I spent Five Years thereof about Translating of the said Book: Insomuch as I found the Words very true which the Old Man in the aforesaid Vision said unto me, *I will shortly provide you both Place and Time to Translate it.*—Then after I had finished the Translation, Dr. *Laud* Archbishop of *Canterbury* sent to me in the Prison, by Dr. *Bray* his Chaplain, Ten Pounds, and desir'd to peruse the Book; he afterwards sent me by Dr. *Bray* Forty Pounds. There was a Committee of the House of Commons for the Printing of this Translation, which was in 1652.”—*Aubrey's Miscellanies*, p. 91 to 95.

* “ Whatsoever was pretended, yet the true Cause of the Captain's Commitment was, because he was urgent with the *Ld. Treasurer* for his Arrears which amounted to a great Sum he was not willing to pay, and to be freed from his Clamours clapt him up into Prison.”—*Aubrey*.

This, like most of the most authentic stories of apparitions, is in fact nothing but a waking dream, like that of Brutus, and there is no less probability that a man should think he heard what was said to him, than that Dr. Johnson should think he heard a person say,

“Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow,” &c. (see p. 387.) The exact intimation given in the words must have been produced by the importance which the captain in his own mind attached to the book which he had to translate, or he may have had some guess of what might be done to him for his urgent applications to the Treasury, and of course the two things most strongly affecting him were uppermost in his dream. The antient man was probably the idea which the captain had of Luther’s appearance, though the reader will easily perceive that there is no resemblance between Luther and the man described. The taking the captain by the ear is a circumstance which strongly corroborates the supposition that the whole was a dream. It is one of those, as it were, jumps of the imagination, from gravity to humour and from humour to gravity, which are particularly observable in sleep. The old gentleman might have been the grandfather of

the person who sent the book to the captain ; but the more general interest which the captain was likely to imagine Martin would have in his own book, makes it most probable that he would rather have him in his mind than the person who concealed the work.

The following is a singular relation of what appear to be supernatural events :—

“ The 22 of *February* 1671, we (says the Master that tells it) Sailed from *Gravesend* ; and the 26th, by Gods Providence we Sailed over the Bar of *Newcastle* and there Loaded the 2d of *March*. About nine or ten of the Clock in the Night Following, we having made all clear and Ready for the Furtherance of our Voyage, some time after Supper I went to Rest, when about twelve of the Clock in the Night ; to the best of my Remembrance, I was Awaked out of my Sleep by a Great Noise (but saw nothing) which to the best of my Capacity bid me *Be gone*, and that I had nothing to do there, but being so hastily Disturbed, and not certain what might be the Cause, I gave it over for a *Dream*, and past that Accident as Uncertain of the Truth. Now after the First Day was Past, about Eight or Nine of the Clock at Night I went to rest ; and about Twelve, my Mate was striking a Light to take a Pipe of Tobacco (as I suppose) and Expecting the Wherry to go up to the Town, being the Tide fell out about Two in the Morning, I desired the Candle might not be put out, and being as well *Awake* as now I am, to the best of my Remembrance, I was then *Pulled* by the hair of my head off from my Pillow, and the same words

Declared unto me as before, and then I saw the Perfect Face and Proportion of a *Man*, in a Black Hat, Stuff-Coat, and Striped Neck Cloth, with Hanging down hair, and a sowe Down-looking Countenance, and his Teeth being set in his Head, I had then time to say Lord have Mercy upon me, What art? at which he Vanished, yet the Candle Burned very Blew, and almost went out: Hereupon being much Discontented, I did by the Following Post give my owners a just Account of what had Befallen me.—The Fifth of that Instant we set Sail: about four of the Clock in the Day, the Wind at *W.S.W.* fair Weather, and a Brave Gale off the Shore, which Continued until half an hour after Eleven on *Wednesday* night; at which time the Man at the Helm called out that he could not *stir* the Helm: but after I had pulled off the Whip-staff; the Ship steered as before, being still fair Weather, the Wind then coming to the *N.W.* and Snowing Weather, but very fair and clear. I was yet Doubtful of more Wind, and therefore caused the Men to furl the Fore Top-sail, and Lower down the Main Top-sail upon the back of the Main-sail, but could not with all the strength we had hale in; the Weather brake off the fore Top-sail, when this was still in my Judgment, that our Ship did hale as much, as when our sails were out, then we haled up our Main-sail, and still the Ship had the same List as with a Large Wind, which to my Judgment might be half a streak or thereabouts.—By this time it was Two of the Clock, then our Men tried the Pump, and found Little or no Water in her; the Man at the Helm called out, that the *Candle Burned* so Blew in the Lanthorn; that it gave Little or no Light, and three several times went out, so that I held the Candle to the Look-out, which Candle did burn very well and showed a good Light, but of a sudden our Ship would not feel the Helm so kindly as before and brought all our Sails Aback, then our Ship heeled as much to Windward as before to Leeward: the Glass being out, we went to the Pump and found no Water in the Ship, but she

did not steer well, Neither could I find the Reason, being still so fair Weather, this unkind steerage made me Urgent to try the Pump yet more, but I could not get the upper Box to work, nor stir, but having taken that up, and trying with the Pump-hook, we could not come near the Lower Box by a foot and half, which to my Judgment was Hindred by something like a *Bull-fish* or Woolsack, that as we forced down, gave up again with the Hook: Whereupon Mistrusting that all was not well, I caused our Men to keep the Coat of our Pump up; and myself Loosned the Tack; in the mean time I ordered two Men to Loose the Boat, which they did being Lashed in three Places: yet they do not Remember to this hour, that they Loosned any of them but the Middlemost; and with three Men in her, the Boat *went over* the Top of the Foresheet, which lay above the Stem, without Touching it, with such Violence, as even Amazed us that saw it; And they that were in the Boat gave such loud cryes as frightened him at the Helm, who came Running out unknown to me, but finding the Ship coming nearer the Wind than formerly, I Ran to the Stair-case, to bid him put the Helm over, but could not: and hearing one jump down at the Hatch, which was open at the half-deck, did suppose that the Helmsman came Down again; and calling him by his Name to come and help me, the word was no sooner out of my Mouth, but I Perceived the *same* Person that I had formerly seen before we came out of the Harbour; who came violently to me, saying, be gone, you have no more to do here, Throwing me in at the Cabbin door, clear upon the Top of the Table; When I crying out, In the Name of God what art, he *Vanished* away in a Flash of Fire; thinking withal that the Ship had split in a Thousand pieces, it giving such a Crack. The Men thereupon calling out, Master, if you be a Man come away, did something Revive me, and striving to have got to my Chest, being I had got some Money in it, I found that something Hindred me, but what it was I could not tell. Then Perceiv-

ing the Main Sea coming in so Fast, that I was up to the waist, before I could get out of the Cabbins, and finding all our Men in the Boat but only one, I desired him to get a Compass; which he did, yet could never after know what became of it. We were no sooner in the Boat, but the Ship *Sank* Down, and yet having a great Sea Fur Gown, which lay upon the Dicker, upon the Ships going Down, the very upset of the Water brought it to the Boats side, and one of our Men took it in, we Reckoned ourselves to be Ten or Twelve Leagues *E. S. E.* from the *Spern*, I Perceived the Fane at the Main-top-Mast-Head, when the Ship was sunk: we Continued in the Boat from three in the Morning till ten or eleven that day, when we were taken up by a *Whitby* Ketch, who used us very kindly, and towed our Boat at his Stern with two Ends of a Hauser, till she brake away: She being Bound for *Newcastle*, and the Wind being Contrary, did on the *Saturday* Following, set us a Shore at *Grimsby* in *Hull* River, where the Mayor gave us a Pass for *London*. This is a True and Perfect Relation to the best of my knowledge in every Respect. *John Pye* Master. And Attested by Nine Men more all Belonging to my Ship.—I Had forget to Express, that one side of my Face is Burnt and Blasted Sorely, which I felt within half an hour after I was gone out of the Ship; but how it came upon me in the Ship I could not tell, being then in a Great Horror and Amazement. Thus *John Pye*.”—*Burthogge on Reason and Spirits*.

This is one of the most singular stories of an apparition ever related, and, I doubt not, but, in the minds of those who first take a thing for granted and then examine the arguments in its favor, (and in this world the

number of such is by no means contemptible,) this relation will have more weight in support of supernatural existences, than all the accounts of Nicolai, and Ben Jonson, and Hotter, and Petrarch, which Dr. Ferriar has given, can possibly have against them. Mr Burthogge adds of this relation, that it is “ a
“ Story Licensed by a Person of Quality, and
“ of Great worth, who I believe has more
“ Honour than to suffer the World to be
“ Palm’d upon by what He knew to be a Fal-
“ sity; and Greater Prudence than to give
“ such a Story a License without some In-
“ quiry after the truth of it.” Who this personage was it is impossible to say; but he appears to have been a believer in ghosts, and that is quite sufficient to shew that he would take the relation at any rate as true, and consider whatever evidence was produced as indubitable. For my part, I cannot imagine what evidence there is to support this extraordinary story incontrovertibly. The master

says that the facts are attested by nine men besides himself. There does not, however, appear to be, to the apparition at least, the testimony of any one man except the master himself, and in the apparition there was nothing so extraordinary as to make it any thing but the creation of the imagination. We have nothing mentioned of the actual state of the vessel when it went out of the harbour, and it may have been that the Captain had apprehensions for his safety, though he had the hardihood to endeavour to weather the voyage to London. If he had any such apprehensions, and there is nothing to shew that he had not, there is every reason to believe that his anxiety might conjure up a phantom such as he describes. There are circumstances which yet remain with a supernatural color, for instance, the Captain's being thrown completely upon the cabin table while calling out for the helmsman. The great crack and the flash of fire bear a great resemblance to

the effect of thunder and lightning, as it is sometimes described at sea, and the weather might be such as that the Captain might be thrown as he described, by a flash of lightning. The effect of lightning upon persons whom it has not killed, but only thrown down, is exactly what he says he felt upon his face. The flash and the crack do not appear, from the relation, to have happened upon his being thrown down, but it may be that the Captain's recollection was so ordered as to find the event to be entirely supernatural, and, therefore, when he wrote his account, he put the circumstances in the most supernatural order possible. There is a mode of explaining this case, more natural, though not so much to Mr. Pye's credit as that we have just employed. He may have sworn his men to secrecy, sunk the ship for his own purposes, and then contrived a supernatural account in order to deceive his owners, whom he had prepared for some misfortune, by informing them of the

first appearance of the ghost. Or, indeed, he may have only had one man in the secret, who may have been accessory to several of the supernatural events, such as the blue burning of the candle, (which the sailors would regard as the infallible forerunner of a ghost,) the flash and the crack, and the throwing over of the boat in an extraordinary manner. We cannot have a complete explanation of this or any very *mysterious* story, because we do not know all the circumstances; but it is some satisfaction to any man to feel that some explanation is always to be arrived at, complete or otherwise, according to the knowledge of circumstances he can obtain.

I must here beg pardon of my readers for some want of order which must be manifest in this Appendix, and I have to entreat it here particularly, because I am about to add some notice of cases which ought to have been mentioned immediately after that of M. Nico-

lai. That case is in many respects completely singular. Similar instances of ghosts proceeding from a diseased mind, however, are commonly circulated.

In the same district of Scotland which I mentioned as furnishing instances of witches, it was customary to employ a foot-post to convey letters for some distance, by that means saving considerable inconvenience. The name of the post-man from Cromarty for some time, some years ago, was Alexander Munroe, more commonly called "Sandy Munroe." A man it happened was found dead upon a common which Sandy had to cross, and as the circumstance of sudden death which his appeared to have been, was, in that part of the kingdom, rather uncommon, Sandy became not a little alarmed. After the idea of the dead man had preyed for some time on his mind, Sandy was much surprised to find the ghost of that personage by his side. He went and called up a person with whom he was acquainted, and as soon as he was joined by him, the ghost left him. When Sandy returned home at night, after his first encounter, the ghost accompanied him even into the town (Cromarty). He threw himself on his bed quite distracted, though when his wife was present the ghost disappeared. He sent her for some whiskey, and as soon as he was left alone the dead man again appeared. After he had endured the agitation consequent on a first acquaintance with a supernatural being, Sandy became reconciled to frequent rencontres with the apparition, which constantly disappeared in the presence of a second person. I have no account of the exact fate of this person, though I have reason to believe that he was visited by the dead man to the day of his death, which is supposed to have taken place only lately.

This case resembles that of M. Nicolai in several particulars. The familiarity which Sandy acquired with his spiritual friend, and the talking, (for the ghost really conversed with the post-man) exactly resembled the circumstances of M. Nicolai's apparitions, but the vanishing when a second person made his appearance is without parallel, though even that fact may be accounted for, from the circumstance of a second person occupying his attention so much, as to preclude the mental illusion for the time. Each particular case, however, should be completely examined, in order to find the numerous causes of differences in the conduct of apparitions.

There is a case of disordered mind which has been lately published, in which a person was accompanied constantly by the ghost of a relation. It is as follows :

“ Hatton-Garden Police Office.—A respectable looking man, between 40 and 50 years of age, was brought up, charged with attempting to hang himself on the branch of a tree near Ca-

nonbury House, on Monday afternoon. He stated his name to be Thomas Davis, a native of Gloucestershire; that his wife was then in service in Gloucestershire, and he had not seen her for four years; that he wanted neither money nor clothes, but he was very uncomfortable. The only thing that troubled him was his wife's mother, who had been dead some time, but her ghost kept constantly haunting him wherever he went, day and night, for which reason, having no other means to get rid of her, he determined to put an end to his existence. He had lodged for several months at the corner of Winfield Street, Whitechapel, but had left it six days ago, and had no lodging since.

“The worthy magistrate reasoned with him for a considerable time, on the great enormity of the crime he was about to commit in taking away his own life. At length he appeared perfectly sensible of his folly, and gave the magistrate a faithful promise that he would never make another attempt on his own life, were he to be haunted by as many ghosts as there were blades of grass growing in the fields.” *London Papers*, April 23d, 1817.

This is a more remarkable case than any other of which I have ever heard; for the apparition appears to have attended the seer without intermission. I have not been able to learn whether he was afterwards visited by his wife's mother; indeed it is probable that his mind, after his attempt at suicide, would undergo an alteration, such as the intellectual

faculties of mad people undergo when suddenly plunged into water, and that he would not again see the ghost.

When large bodies of people have imbibed any very strong superstitious ideas, it may probably happen, and it no doubt does happen, that the whole may be so far mentally disordered as to believe they see each some wonderful apparition, and not only to believe they see something, but every man of them, more or less, strongly to believe he sees the same thing at the same time, according as his superstitious notions are more or less powerful upon him. All or most of men near the lamentable scene might imagine, after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, that "the graves
" were opened, and many of the * * * Saints
" * * * appeared unto many," but in such a case concurrent testimony might not be any proof of the reality of apparitions.—In a great republican city, where all were politicians,

and all equally superstitious, all would probably have nearly the same apprehensions at particular periods, and consequently all might see the same horrible omens of disasters they anticipated. Concurrent testimony, therefore, in cases of apparitions, must not be regarded, except it can be proved that all the witnesses were not equally inclined to be deceived, without indeed in most instances having any power over their own inclinations.

The following account of the Fata Morgana, taken principally from the account of Father Minasi, who saw it, and says he would rather see it again than the finest theatrical exhibition ever made, may be amusing to my readers :

“ When the rising sun shines from that point whence its incident ray forms an angle of about 45 degrees on the sea of Reggio, and the bright surface of the water in the bay is not disturbed either by the wind or the current, the spectator being placed on an eminence of the city, with his back to the sun and his face to the sea ; on a sudden there appear in the water, as in a catoptric theatre, various multiplied objects, that is to

say numberless series of pilasters, arches, castles well delineated, regular columns, lofty towers, superb palaces with balconies and windows, extended alleys of trees, delightful plains with herds and flocks, armies of men on foot and horseback, and many other strange images in their natural colors and proper actions, passing rapidly in succession along the surface of the sea during the whole of the short period of time while the above mentioned causes remain.—But if, in addition to the circumstances before described, the atmosphere be highly impregnated with vapour and dense exhalations not previously dispersed by the action of the wind or waves, or rarified by the sun, it then happens that in this vapour, as in a curtain extended along the channel to the height of about 30 palms and nearly down to the sea, the observer will behold the scene of the same objects not only reflected on the surface of the sea, but likewise in the air, though not so distinct or well defined as the former objects from the sea.—Lastly, if the air be slightly hazy and opaque, and at the same time dewy and adapted to form the iris, then the above mentioned objects will appear only at the surface of the sea, as in the first case, but all vividly colored, or fringed in red, green, blue, and other prismatic colors.”—*Nicholson's Journal for 1797.*

In addition to his curious descriptions of the phenomena of the Fata Morgana, which he divides into the three kinds, the peculiarities of which we have just enumerated, the ingenious author has given a plate, by which he proves that these appearances are all produced from the shore, which Mr. Nicholson

has copied and inserted at page 240 of the vol. of his Journal already alluded to. Mr. Nicholson thinks these appearances are plainly produced from the calm sea, and one or more strata of superincumbent air, differing in refractive and consequently in reflective power. The description itself conveys the cause in general; a more particular explanation could not well be given, except by a personal examination of the phenomena.—In the same volume of Nicholson's Journal, the reader will find an account of a singular appearance of Presqu'isle on Lake Erie, in a letter from a Mr. Andrew Elliott to David Rittenhouse, which appearance in former days might certainly have been considered supernatural.—Such appearances are frequent from the refractions upon mists at particular seasons on the coast of Scotland, and some very fine ones have been observed about the harbour of Cromarty above mentioned. It is needless to multiply examples, for these singular appear-

ances may, I dare say, be found, under particular circumstances, in all parts of the world. My readers will find in Crantz's History of Greenland some very curious accounts of appearances produced on the atmosphere, most probably peculiar to a cold country.

The account of the appearance of an army, or rather of two distinct bodies of troops, mentioned in p. 427, is as follows :—

“ The following marvellous narrative, communicated by the Ghost Seers, has produced a good deal of conversation in a part of this county, and may serve to astonish the credulous, amuse the sceptical, and occupy the speculative :—On Sunday evening the 28th ult. between seven and eight o'clock, Anthony Jackson, farmer, aged 45 years, and Martin Turner, the son of William Turner, farmer, aged 15 years, while engaged in inspecting their cattle, grazing on Havarah Park, near Ripley, part of the estate of Sir John Ingleby, Bart. were suddenly surprised by a most extraordinary appearance in the Park. Turner, whose attention was first drawn to this spectacle, said, “ Look Anthony, what a quantity of beasts ! ”—“ Beasts,” cried Anthony, “ Lord bless us ! they are not beasts, they are men ! ” By this time the body was in motion, and the spectators discovered that it was an army of soldiers, dressed in a white military uniform, and that in the centre stood a Personage of commanding aspect, clothed in scarlet. After performing a number of evolutions, the body began to march in perfect order

to the summit of a hill, passing the spectators at a distance of about 100 yards. No sooner had the first body, which seemed to consist of several hundreds, and extended four deep, over an inclosure of thirty acres, attained the hill, than another assemblage of men, far more numerous than the former, dressed in dark-coloured clothes, arose and marched, without any apparent hostility, after the military spectres; at the top of the hill both the parties formed what the spectators called an L, and passing down the opposite side of the hill, disappeared. At this moment a volume of smoke, apparently like that vomited by a park of artillery, spread over the plain, and was so imperious, as for nearly two minutes to hide the cattle from the view of Jackson and Turner, who hurried home with all possible expedition, and the effect upon their minds, even at this distance of time, is so strong, that they cannot mention the circumstances without visible emotion!!

“ We have had the curiosity, and an idle curiosity perhaps it was, to collate the accounts of this strange vision, as given by the two spectators, and find them to agree in every part, with these exceptions:—The young man says, that as far as he could mark the progress of time while a scene so novel and alarming was passing before him, he thinks that from the appearance of the first body to the disappearance of the smoke, might be about five minutes; Jackson says it could not be less than a quarter of an hour, and that during all this time they were making to each other such observations as arose out of the spectacle. The junior spectator says, he observed amongst the first body, arms glistening in the sun; the senior says, it might be so, but that did not strike him, nor can he, in thinking of it since, recal any such appearance to his recollection. On this strange story we shall only observe, that the ground forming the scene of action is perfectly sound, and not likely to emit any of those exhalations which might arise from a swamp—that the narrators are both persons of character—that those

who know them best, believe them most, and that they themselves are unquestionably convinced of the truth of their own narrative—that tradition records a scene somewhat similar, exhibited on Stockton Forest, about the breaking out of the present war—and that we shall be glad to receive any satisfactory elucidation of this *Phantasmagoria*.”—(*Leeds Mercury*.)—
From the Tyne Mercury, July 28, 1812.

The following ingenious attempt at explaining these appearances, is copied from the *Tyne Mercury* of August 4th, 1812, and I am only sorry that I am not able to give to my readers the name of its author :—

“ *To the Editor of the Tyne Mercury.*

“ MR. EDITOR,—I find a peculiar satisfaction in the perusal of your weekly journal, from its being not totally dedicated to matters of public intelligence, but admitting whatever interesting phenomena may occur in nature worthy of being submitted to the speculations of ingenious men. This makes me hope that you may find a place for a few remarks on that surprising appearance of visionary armies, which is narrated in your last.

“ It is remarkable that most of those opinions relative to witches, giants, visions, and spectres, which prevailed in unenlightened ages, and which civilization gradually explodes, are found interwoven historically with the course of things recorded in holy writ, and there may be found passages in Ezekiel, and other of the prophets, where the apparitions of armed hosts, not very dissimilar to the present, on the hills of Judea, are expressly mentioned.

Such were the warrior sons of heaven,
 To whose high care Judea's state was given,

Who wont of old their nightly watch to keep,
A host of Gods on Sion's tow'ry steep.

“It would be unwarrantable, I admit, to argue the truth of such occurrences as the present, from what has been exhibited in those ages, and that country, which were appropriated to miracles, and out-lawed, if I may so speak, from the common walk of nature. Such authority, however, may be allowed to screen us from that contempt which sceptical men direct towards those who give a moment's thought to the elucidation of these subjects.

“One course of probable argument by which we might be inclined to satisfy ourselves, is, in the present instance, cut off by the plurality of witnesses ; for whatever effect might be allowed to arise from the derangement of the intellect, or the nerves of vision on a single person, we reject the possibility of more than one being thus deluded at the same moment into the perception of similar, false, and visionary images.

“I think it, however, possible, that some satisfactory light may be thrown on this matter, by accumulative induction of analogous appearances, which have confessedly arisen from natural causes. Most men have witnessed, in some degree, the strange and fantastical convolutions, that are exhibited by those aëriform substances, which do not elude the sight by their transparency, and yet are readily acted upon by the currents of the atmosphere. Adair, in his North American travels, relates, that having been satisfied with contemplating the general grandeur and sublimity of the fall at Niagara, he and his companion were drawn to admire the variety of shapes which the super-impendent vapour assumed beneath the impulse of the wind. “Sometimes,” says he, “it was driven with violence against the rocky mountain to the north, and being broken by its projecting rugosities, it ascended, but with greater rapidity, like an army climbing to the storm of some citadel on the summit. We thought, as it shone in the setting sun,

that we could perceive the glistening of armour, and in the prismatick colours, we fancied to ourselves the military uniforms of our countrymen"—*Page 52, New York Ed.*

"The recollection of this passage struck me much by its analogy to the case before us, and indeed was the occasion of this essay. I am rather confirmed in my conjecture that the cases may be really parallel, from its being observed by Jackson and Turner, the spectators in this case, that the whole vanished into a white vapour. Now, this is precisely what happens, when the impulse, which breaks and varies the uniformity of aëriform fluids is removed: they subside again into a uniform and colourless mass. Thus it is that the wonderful sand-pillars, which are heaved by the wind out of the desarts, beneath the equator, descend in a shower of dust, when the force which upheld them is withdrawn.

"It is not an objection to this hypothesis, that the place where this scene was witnessed is not a swamp. Swamps do not usually produce sudden exhalations. The moisture is there gradually evaporated. But where, beneath a surface firm and tenacious, there has been an accumulation of water, if this is converted by the sun, or by subterraneous warmth, into vapour, it finds its way at once, and in a body into the air, when the cavity which contains it is overcharged. Indeed, it happens that the lighter and more rarefied parts first escape, and subsequently those more condensed.

"By this circumstance, I account for the double vision, and the diversity of colour: for the darkness and opacity of the latter, accords very well with the idea that it might consist of those more opaque particles which had last escaped. I am aware that it may be said, that a supposition which admits the concurrence and combination of so many phenomena, which have been so lately observed among the variations of nature, is harsh and improbable. To this I reply, that what is extraordinary must ever be improbable, and if on this ground we reject the explanation, we must reject the fact also.

“ I might have connected and explained these suggestions with greater perspicuity and prolixity, had I not been reluctant to occupy at all, by matters of mere curiosity, those columns which you are accustomed to dedicate to the promotion of freedom and happiness among your countrymen.

“ A CONSTANT READER.”

My readers will plainly perceive, from the relation itself, that the colors mentioned, though not such as to make a man at first sight believe what he saw to be soldiers, were exactly such as might be expected from an exhalation of a particular description. We can fancy an exhalation just rising from the earth as nearly as possible resembling a number of beasts, and we can suppose, that, if it remained stationary, any person that saw it would imagine it to be beasts ; but the fact is, that the moment after one of the persons in this relation had said, “ look Anthony, what a “ quantity of beasts,” the exhalation changed, moved upwards, and was then likened by the other to a body of soldiers. The whole of the motions of these bodies of troops must have been finished in a very short period. One of the

witnesses says a quarter of an hour, but, as the other declares, it could not be so long, for, from the reading of the relation, exaggerated as it must be, the movements from first to last remind me of nothing more forcibly than the rapid movements upon the surface of a soap bubble. The reader will observe the resemblance between this case and that of Mr. Booty. In the one, a white body was followed by a dark one; in the other, a person in grey clothes was followed by a person in black. It is natural that the black, being the heaviest part of the exhalation, should be the last or lowest. Those who saw the whole, could best explain the appearance of the person in scarlet, but it is most probable that that would be some part of the sky, a portion of a bright cloud, or of some vapour not connected with the exhalation. The want of connexion would probably remain unperceived, from the astonishment of the seers, even though it should not have vanished with the rest of the

cavalcade. I have not sufficient acquaintance with the nature of vapour, to say that a piece might not be of a red color ; but, as it is most likely that this commander would be obscured by the march of the body, after he was first visible, though the object mistaken for a man in scarlet did not move, the case will admit of such an explanation. It is surprising that mankind should have so long conceived, in any age of the world, that these armies, &c. were really prognosticators of strange events, or that they were really supernatural forces, when, in the pages of poets, almost from the creation to the present time, we have armies themselves, compared to torrents, to clouds descending from the hills, &c.

Before I conclude, it may be considered proper to make a few observations upon the powers which men have at various periods possessed, which have been reckoned supernatural, and which have carried with them the

appearance of particular divine interference. The most accurate definition of supernatural power, is, I think, the ability to do something uncommon, and approaching to impossibility, without any adequate natural means appearing in the performance. Thus we have traditions of men *wishing* themselves from place to place, raising palaces with a thought, and destroying enemies with a glance. These powers, poets have always attributed to persons real or ideal, whom they celebrated, from an idea that, in the possession of such powers, there was some resemblance in greatness to the character of the Deity; and, indeed, some men are found to have been deified in the early ages, or were supposed to have had connexion with something divine, from their repute in performing extraordinary things without apparent means. In the book of Exodus, which contains the first *authenticated* account, I believe, of the exercise of supernatural power, we find the magicians of

Pharoah performing many of the miracles which Moses brought upon the Egyptians *by the command of God*, and the very reason that these magicians assign for their belief that something which Moses did proceeded from the “finger of God,” is, that they could not do it; that, in fact, they were acquainted with no means by which it could be performed. But the perceiving no means by which one of our own species performs certain actions, gives us no criterion whereby we may ascertain whether that person is divinely appointed to act amongst us.* It is impossible for us to know by what means the Deity created the world, or how he performs many of

* If it should be argued by those who are more conversant in holy writ than myself, that what the magicians did was at the instigation and by the instructions of the devil, it may be a curious question how the works of the devil and the Deity can be distinguished, except in degree. The devil went so far, and did exactly what Moses did under the authority of the Deity, but he was finally overcome by Moses, who, assisted by superior power, brought a greater degree of evil upon the Egyptians than his satanic majesty had the means of producing!

the simplest operations in nature. We have no reason to believe that the Deity did or does every thing without means, and we have no cause whatever to imagine that Moses, by his superiority in miraculous performances, was under the protection of God, because we know of no means by which he could work many of his miracles, any farther than it happens, that, as the man who amongst us does any extraordinary thing with the least possible difficulty, is considered as remarkably able, so it is imagined that the Deity must use no means in doing what he does, as the greater the quantity of means required, it is supposed there is the greater degree of difficulty. The Deity himself was the means by which the universe was created; we may dispute *ad infinitum*, and never come to any clearer conclusion. In fact, we have no right whatever to mingle transactions upon this earth with any thing of which we know nothing but by conjecture. All our thoughts and language teach

us only to know that every effect implies some cause, and I think it is impossible but that in effects which we see to be somewhat similar, there must be some similarity of causes. The magicians managed to produce frogs as well as Moses, and it is very laughable indeed that they could not contrive to generate lice; but no rational mind can think any thing upon this subject, but that Moses must have possessed the secret of bringing upon the Egyptians some disease, which the magicians either could not or would not produce. But then there is the thick darkness, the darkness that might be felt. This must have been an eclipse. But indeed, the whole history of Moses, and those who followed him, is enveloped in a darkness that has been *felt* by Turk, Jew, and Christian, age after age, in the miseries of bloodshed and persecution.—One of the most wonderful supernatural powers which has ever been exercised, is that of incantation, or performing whatever is wished

by charm. This power is said to have been practised, in all the common stories of witches, generally for purposes of destruction, and is, in that particular, now commonly discredited. There is a means of cure of disorders, however, which is a kind of destruction by charm, yet often believed, and of the effects of which I myself have been an eye-witness.— When about nine years of age, I went with a friend to an old woman, who was understood to destroy warts. The old woman rubbed my friend's warts, with one finger, three several Fridays, muttering something whilst she performed the operation, and they very shortly disappeared. I had a practical proof of this person's skill, for she, at the same time, rubbed and muttered over a wart I had, which was destroyed in a week. Whether she had a little aquafortis, or some strong corrosive mixture upon the point of her finger, I do not know, nor had I then doubt enough in supernatural agency to ask her, but I remember

well that she had not any intimation of our coming. Perhaps her business was so great in the healing way, that she kept herself in constant readiness. Few of my readers will forget having, sometime in their lives, read something about Nathaniel Greatrakes, the person who, by touch, could heal various curable and *incurable* disorders. This person was possessed of no extraordinary faculty till he went to Ireland to take possession of an estate that had been left him,* and then he began to perform the most remarkable

* It is generally said that Ireland rejects all venomous animals. This is a fact which I have had no means of investigating; but, if it be so, I have no doubt but natural causes may be discovered in defiance of St. Patrick. It is believed by many Irishmen that there is really a supernatural power that preserves them from the intrusion of venomous reptiles; and I have seen an Irishman, *apparently conscious of the power with which he had been endowed from his native land*, take a toad or a newt in his hand, on which it presently would appear to labour under great pain, and, after puffing and swelling a short time, would drop down and expire. The Irishman by whom this was done, however, did not inform me of what I always suspected, that they had given the poor animals a very awkward squeeze when they first took them into their hands.

cures, by the application of his hand alone.— There was a controversy carried on about his time, on the subject of his cures, and the general sentiment was in his favor. The general opinion will always be, that there were no mortal or common means of performing such astonishing cures, as long as one party conceal all such means, and the other either cannot find, or will not endeavour to discover them.

Most of these cures have been performed by the imagination itself. A singular instance of this came before Sir Matthew Hale. A person was accused before him of using witchcraft in the cure of disorders ; on examination of the spell, which was said to have performed a number of very wonderful cures, Sir Matthew discovered it to be some latin sentence which he had in a merry humour given as a cure for the ague to the keeper of a house in which he had been, when he

could not pay the whole of the reckoning! Those who have not been cured by their imaginations alone, have no doubt had some application made to them along with the touch. I should have made a distinction between the kind of touching which I first mentioned, and that of Mr. Greatrakes, as well as the Royal touch, which is of the same kind, only that the latter, to be efficacious, requires less application of the hand. There is no incantation, or prayer, or charm necessary in the Royal touch, nor was any used by Greatrakes.—There was indeed a form of prayer appointed on the exercise of the Royal touch, but it was not generally attended to. My readers will find just as much proof of the efficacy of the Royal touch, as of the bad effects of being bewitched. But here I must caution those who, recurring in their practice to the times of bigotted royalty, may wish to prove the divine right to the throne by the existence of this power, for unfortunately it was equally

effective in the reigns of the York as in those of the Lancaster family, and there are accounts of persons having been cured by the Duke of Monmouth. The virtue of cure by touching seems to exist primarily in the throne, and to be conferred upon the monarch by his having been seated there.

There are several powers of which we have read in ancient history, the possession of which would frequently be enviable in the present state of society. The being in two places at once was a gift of the Deity, often enjoyed in ancient times by the Saints, as well as by prophane magicians. My readers will readily guess the advantages that the servants of God as well as of Mammon would have by being able to prove a constant alibi. The ability of moving without a shadow at any time was likewise wonderfully useful. This is a power which, by a judicious disposal of lights round the person so as to counteract

one another, a man might always possess, but it was formerly held without any artificial means, and indeed was the gift of his satanic majesty to his choicest disciples. The power of invoking spirits, or I ought rather to say the power of bringing spirits by invocations, is so completely discontinued, that I much fear, for the discomfiture of superstition, it will never again be revived. Civilization has tended gradually to banish the despotism of powers which gloomy imaginations and misconceptions of the nature of divinity had occasioned. In a less enlightened period, the Deity was considered to be the protector of each little horde, and the enemy of every human creature beyond their boundaries; they believed divinity to be near them, to support them in their adversities and to fight with them in their battles, as if the Mover of Worlds was the patron of one chosen swarm of pismires. Some of them supposed that a being created by the Great Cause himself,

presumed to raise his weakness against Omnipotence, and that the God of infinity, perhaps afraid lest another rebellion might endanger his dominion, divided his power with that atom, by whose exertions his grandeur and his will have ever since been sullied and counteracted. The farther we have advanced, however, the more completely have we become convinced that the being whose name and whose nature is benevolence, is One, undivided and eternal; whose throne is the human heart and whose temple is the universe; whose laws are never inconsistent or contradictory; who has never created objects of knowledge without giving the means for its attainment; whose essence is creation without beginning and without end.

For the present I must conclude. I hope, in what I have said, I have not offended any individual, or any class or particular sect of the community; and I trust that my readers

will find, on a deliberate examination of the principles on which I have written, that any slight contradiction or incongruity with which they may meet in these essays, is not a consequence necessary to those principles, but a mark, and perhaps an excuseable mark, of the feebleness of their advocate. Let me entreat them to consider any such inconsistencies as may obtrude themselves on their attention, as no proof of the impropriety of the principles; let them only be carefully examined, and they will be found capable of reconciliation, the more complete from their first apparent opposition to each other; like drops of quicksilver, though they may for a time resist each other, they will finally coalesce.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page 14. line 15. *for have read has*
 ib. — 18. *read on the side*
 58. — 17. *for Dukes of Buccleuch read Dukes of Argyle*
 40. — 22. *after evidence read as to its difficulty*
 46. — 4. *for perused read penned*
 60. — 25. *for influence read inference*
 63. — 1. *for The read Their*
 127. — 11. *for conducive of read conducive to*
 136. — 12. *for accordingly read according*
 178. — 11. *after object read so that invention follows*
 224. — 11. *for loose read lose*
 228. — 6. *and elsewhere for Mr. Prichard read Dr. Prichard*
 273. — 2. *after modify read it*
 285. — 6. *for lay read lie*
 293. — 13. *for Wharton read Warton*
 303. — 17. *for playfellows read schoolfellows*
 305. — 4. *for Giaseppina read Gioseppino*
 307. — 17. *for Lauaerius read Lanaerius*
 326. — 16. *in "let not your enemies," dele not*
 ——— 27. *for genuises read geniuses*
 330. — 7. *and 30. for act read art*
 333. — 29. *for tirauna read Tiranna*
 366. — 16. *for are from nature read is, &c.*
 ——— 18. *and 19. for shortly come to read find above*
 ——— 25. *for effluvia read effluvium*
 575. — 13. *dele and*
 390. — 12. *after afterwards read or at the precise period*
 ——— 15. *and 16. for de Naturâ Deorum read de Divinatione*
 423. — 4. *for though read and*
 426. — 10. *for Kirchen read Kircher*
 452. — 10. *for allusion read illusion*
 489. — 20. *for bye read by*

✍ I must beg pardon of my readers for the peculiar sense in which some words have been used in these essays, such as *incomparable*, *ephemeral*, &c. Such apparent improprieties are sometimes rendered necessary to avoid circuitous expressions.







